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# THE SIXPENNY MAGAZINE.

JULY 1, 1866.

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## HOW I ROSE IN THE WORLD.

## CHAPTER I.

## CONTAINS A LITTLE OF MY EARLY LIFE.

I AM a small boy, trotting, on a dark night, through narrow lanes and gloomy thoroughfares; thick, drizzling rain is coming down, and I am crying. A man is before me right a-head, and I strain every nerve in my little body in the bootless effort to overtake him. I shout to him at intervals—scream, roar, bellow—all in vain. I cough occasionally, for the unnatural exertion of a naturally weak voice causes my throat to tickle, and renders this proceeding an important and imperative one. I am breathless and in agony. Drops of moisture stand upon my brow, and trickle down my nose; they mingle with my tears, and find a common resting-place in my mouth. I gasp, and almost choke. My throat swells, even to suffocation, and I tug at my shirt collar in the desperation of despair. Ah! joy unutterable! the button-hole bursts, the band gives way, and I feel the keen, cold air upon my neck and bosom. I am relieved, and press on, but the man is still before me. As he passes along he flings up his arms into the damp and misty night, at one moment shouting with all his might, as if to test the strength and quality of his lungs, and the next pausing to look in at some imposing "gin palace," whose dancing lights, splendid fittings, and costly array of glass and pewter present such powerful attractions to our hardy sons, and, alas! too often daughters of toil.

Into one of those "whited sepulchres" a woman also looks with gleaming, hungry eyes. A young, shrunk, faded woman, with "want" as plainly written upon her wan face as if stamped therewith red-hot iron. Wretched—incomparably wretched—is this poor outcast in the abjectness of her unmitigated poverty,

wretched, incomparably wretched, in her hollow, sunken eye and wasted form—wretched, oh! *how* incomparably wretched in the little bleached skeleton she holds tightly to her breast, and which seeks to draw sustenance from that fount now for ever dry. This apparition speaks to the man; lays a fleshless hand timidly upon his arm; but with a strange oath he shakes her off, and mother and child roll together in the mud. On he passes, and his enthusiasm increases at every step. A ragged urchin, with an attenuated candle suspended by the wick, ventures, as he emerges from a chandler's shop, to congratulate him upon the execution of a favourite ballad; but he kicks the youth who told the "flattering tale," and still goes on. On, through courts, lanes, and alleys, narrow, dark, and dirty, where "Prince Pestilence" and "King Death" hold such joyous revel—on, through noble streets and broad thoroughfares, his song becoming louder, and his enthusiasm wilder, proportionate to the encouragement he receives.

Is he drunk or mad, this racing, roaring gentleman?

For the moment he is both.

Heedless of the angry wayfarers, elbowed rudely from his path, he crosses Westminster Bridge, and, reaching the corner of "Stangate," suddenly stops. With a bound I am by his side, clutching nervously at a lamp-post for support, and endeavouring to gaze up into his face, now scarce discernable by the feeble light which struggles down upon us from its height above.

The man is tall and powerful-looking, with a huge moustache and a splendid dark eye. They seowl at me (the moustache and the eye), but I do not fear them. A hand is raised against me, yet I do not shrink; a voice speaks to me, and I answer. This is what it

begone!"





"I will *not* begone! You have struck my mother, and I have followed you to say that the day will come when you shall repent it."

"Ha! ha! ha! How like his father—George Allen, as I knew him when a boy. But what shall I repent?"

"That blow! Had George Allen lived he would have torn you to pieces. *I* cannot do that *yet*; but George Allen lives in George Allen's son, and as surely as there's a God in heaven I will repay you."

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen. I am small, I know, for my age, but my frame is strong. Feel it; it is *iron*."

"Come this way. So! now you are in a long narrow passage; it is dark, and no human being near. What should prevent my dashing your brains out against that dripping wall?"

"Nothing, perhaps."

"Are you afraid?"

"Afraid! No."

"Why? Is not my arm strong?"

"Yes, but *God's* is stronger still! *It* holds you back; you cannot harm me."

"You are right. Now listen to me. Eighteen years ago I met your mother for the first time at a garrison ball, given by a few officers to the fashionables of Brighton and its immediate neighbourhood. I had not been half an hour in her society when I loved, or, what is pretty much the same, *fancied* I loved her. I determined she should be my wife, and as I was then young, rich, and tolerably handsome, and she the portionless daughter of a retired subaltern, I felt no doubt of my success. In due time I knelt at her feet, and asked her to share with me my name and fortune, and, without a moment's reflection, she *refused*. Two years from this she married your father, a young surgeon of good family, and lived with him in Paradise, whilst I was with the *damned*. Maddened by disappointment, I plunged headlong into the vortex of a dissipation that, at the time, I loathed. I drank, gamed,

cheated, quarrelled, fought, seduced—all but *murdered*. Your father was an old schoolfellow of my own. I had long known him to labour under heart disease, and some devil whispered in my ear that he would not live long. I listened to this whispering devil, and believed him. Now, mark his end. He was connected with one of the principal hospitals in London, and his practice was both varied and extensive. One day he was called upon to remove the leg of a poor labourer, who had fallen from a height, and lay in a very critical and dangerous state, at a farmhouse some five or six miles south of Charing Cross. The operation was performed carefully and skilfully, and the local surgeon had just taken him by the hand, for the purpose of offering some professional compliment, when he staggered back, and sank heavily into a seat. They bore him to the light and air, but all was over. One flash of triumph from his large, dark eye; one smile upon his pallid lip—a hurried breath—a gurgling groan—a gush of bright red blood; and so, with the amputated limb of a saved man in his grasp, he passed into eternity."

"Why do you tell me this?"

"You shall know. But listen still. The shock to your mother was, as you can well imagine, a terrible one; her reason gave way, and, for a time, she was the inmate of a mad-house. When that reason returned, and renewed health had brought back the light to her eye and the colour to her cheek, she seemed to me lovelier than ever, and again I presented myself—again to be refused. Yes, boy, she was true to her first love—true as I was false. Well, I did not tire, for I knew that poverty, like a blight, would one day come upon her, and that then my hour of triumph would be near. It was so. Your father dead, numerous friends quickly dropped off, and poor Mrs. Allen was passed by, if not forgotten, at least unrecognised. Debts accumulated, creditors became clamorous, positive want



stared her in the face, and she was at length driven from her home into the streets, a houseless wanderer. The end was now at hand. On a bitter January morning she stood weary, footsore, and humbled before me, without one human being in this Christian England to succour, assist, comfort, or console her. "Save us, and—" She could go no further. Grace and yourself cried with pain, and hunger, and exposure to cold; and, as she sank upon her knees, and in an agony flung her child into my arms, I felt that the *mother* had at length triumphed, and that she was now indeed my own."

"But that blow?"

"God! 'twas a cruel one, and I could almost wish that the hand that dealt it were now hacked off at the wrist. But go home, boy, and bide your time, and the day *will* come for your revenge."

Night passed, and the cold, grey dawn of a December morning broke slowly enough through the window of my sleeping apartment. With a cry, I started up, rubbed my eyes, tumbled out of bed, hurried on one or two necessary articles of clothing, and then proceeded to make a hasty toilet, consisting, as it chiefly did, in dabbing the wet corner of a towel into each eye, running one hand through my hair, giving the waistband of my trousers an encouraging hitch, and then quietly slipping on my vest and jacket. Having got through this ordeal very satisfactorily—and I appeal to my boy readers of fourteen if it be *not* an ordeal—I sat down to recall the occurrences of the past day. To do this, I found it necessary to re-enact the scene of the preceding night, in which, as it appeared to me, I had played a rather prominent part; and, after half-an-hour's private communion with myself, I rose from my chair, and sought my mother's room, bearing with me the full conviction that I was a remarkably brave little fellow, and that the dark man, my step-father, was a most thorough-paced rascal.

How he and I came to be at

loggerheads on that eventful night shall now be shown.

My father, as the attentive reader is already aware, was a young surgeon, struggling for a position, who married my mother, the daughter of a defunct, and—for some cause that I am unable to explain—*pensionless* infantry lieutenant, through downright honest love, and nothing else. He cared little about money, and less about pedigree; and poor, plain little Mary Tate, in a two-storeyed, ivy-porched, latticed-windowed cottage, would have been pretty much the same to him as the *Honourable* Mary Tate, with a mansion in "Belgravia," and a castle or two in Yorkshire. The title, or the *sound* of it, might one day fall coldly on his ears, and the mansion and castles no longer find favour in his sight; but the simple, trusting, faithful woman's heart would ever be a "priceless jewel." What wealth, thought Dr. Allen, can purchase *that*?

Of the union referred to I was the first fruit, and I had played my little part upon the stage of life nearly six years when my father abruptly quitted it. Every circumstance connected with his death I remember as distinctly as if they were but the occurrences of yesterday, and I sometimes feel a melancholy pleasure in dwelling upon them.

About nine o'clock on the morning of the eighteenth March, 1826, he left his home light-hearted and happy, and was brought back three or four hours later, by pallid, awe-stricken men, a cold, breathless corpse.

They lay that corpse upon a bed, and an anguish-torn woman bends over it. In a corner, and busily occupied knocking the nose off a china dog, stands a little boy. That little boy is myself. I am not *so* busy or pre-occupied but that I can see what passes—the darkened room—the coffin—the sheets—the pitying looks—and, above all, the pale, cold face of the early dead. I see, too, men and women hurrying hither and thither, and hear noise and confusion of all sorts, and



a little crying, and a good deal of swearing, and some suppressed laughter; and, in the midst of all, a strange feeling of loneliness creeps over me, and I shudder, I scarce know why. In that corner I stand unthought of and neglected,—nobody has spoken to me, nobody has looked at me, not even my mother. Heart and mind, and soul, and thought, are with the dead, and I am quite forgotten. But for *that day only*, for the following one I am taken in a coach a long way into the country, and, in a quiet churchyard, I stand beside a new-made grave; and there they lay all that is mortal of George Allen.

*Then* came our troubles. *Then* did the shadow of death really rest upon our house.

Three months passed and I was alone, unless, indeed, a gloomy old domestic with a decidedly puritanical cast of countenance could be called a companion. Where was my mother? In a *madhouse*! So said this hard-fisted, hard-featured, and I might, alas! add, hard-hearted specimen of humanity; and to do her nothing but simple justice, I am bound to say that on this occasion, at least, she spoke the truth. I may remark, in passing, that her name was Jenkins, and if she be still in the flesh I should wish to see her—that's all! I never liked this woman, and it is now highly improbable that I ever shall. The glance of her cold grey eye brought terror to my childish heart; and as for her *voice*—why it was anything the reader chooses to imagine it—*except* "low music." She was fully sixty, and tall, thin, and straight, like an old regulation-ramrod. She was known to be married, and to be living in constant apprehension of a visit from Mr. J. himself, who, some eight or ten years previous to the opening of this story, had been obligingly accommodated with a free passage to some far-off land by the Government of the day, England having been considered too narrow a field for the proper cultivation of his peculiar talents. He was said to

have been possessed of a most inquiring mind, and to have frequently laboured in the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties of no ordinary character, and it was, therefore, thought prudent to transfer his services to some distant settlement, where they would be indubitably appreciated and rewarded. The warrior (he had been in the army) sometimes corresponded with the wife of his bosom, using a sheet of foolscap for the purpose, the postage of which *she* had always to pay; and on one occasion, greatly to her alarm, hinted the probability of his returning at no very distant day, to become again the partner of her home and affections.

For a long time I entertained as strong doubts of this lady's honesty as the world in general seemed to have done that of her husband's; and in the face of much difficulty and discouragement I determined to keep my eye upon her. This, however, was all I could do. For had she taken my little body, as she did my little body's best habiliments, and transferred it with them to the keeping of one of those worthies who have been called (though why I know not) "Uncles" to the whole human race; such was my dread of her that I dared not have resisted. I saw, day by day, and with increasing apprehension of an attack upon myself, the wardrobe of my father, the best dresses of my mother, and my own Sunday jackets and trousers handed over to the keeping of one of those relatives, and I feared that his close connection with the family would be considered a sufficient excuse for his not being asked to return them.

It was an amusing sight to see us two living together in that great old house, with nothing to break in upon the desolation of the scene save the diurnal visits of the milkman (who was a *boy* of my own age, by the way), and those of a grave, middle-aged gentleman, named Martin, a dustman by profession, brother to Mrs. J., and as rigid and morose as herself. This

individual might have been seen occasionally of a Sunday evening perched upon a stool in the neighbourhood of Highbury, warning sinners of their evil ways. For this performance he received eighteen pence per night, but not considering the pay sufficiently remunerative, especially during the winter months, he contrived to drop the curtain at nine o'clock, or at all events as near to it as circumstances would permit, and seek our home, where a comfortable little supper, and something hot after it, invariably awaited him, "just to keep the cold out of his stomach, poor man."

Mr. Martin never regarded me with any peculiar favour or affection, that I could see. He always made faces at me when he called, shook his head, and said that I was on the "broad road," and likely, he feared, to continue there for the remainder of my days. He also used to call me a variety of awful names, the very sound of which made my rather closely-cropped hair stand on end, and usually wound up with some allusion to the "Valley of Jehoshaphat," which I did not then understand, nor, indeed, do I now. Spiritual affairs, however, did not appear to have engrossed all his time and attention. Matters of a strictly secular nature sometimes obtruded themselves, and the *Christian* was occasionally absorbed in the *man*. So absorbed, indeed, that Mr. Martin, dustman and "sinner warner" as he was, became a most important and effective auxiliary in carrying out his sister's designs; and it is marvellous how many articles disappeared from the culinary department under *his* immediate superintendence, which would otherwise have successfully baffled the skill and defied the strength of the good lady herself. It was, I say, an amusing sight. The work of plunder "going bravely on," with as much indifference to *my* presence as if I were one of the coal scuttles which the dustman, with unexampled gravity, from time to time consigned to his cart.

And so the months went by, and the long summer days departed, and winter began to throw its dark shadow across our gloomy hearth. Crouched over the decaying embers of a particularly small fire, learning my lesson (for I went to school), or listening to the sermonings of my friend the dustman, the time passed, but still my mother came not. I counted the weeks, the days, the hours, sadly, slowly, drearily.

One bleak, cold night towards the end of March a strange knock was heard at the door, and Mrs. J., with surprise and alarm struggling for the mastery in her face, rose to open it. I hugged myself inwardly, for I knew the knock was not the knock of the dustman. In a moment she returned, followed by an elderly gentleman, whom I remembered to have seen at our house once or twice, and who was, I had been told, a distant connection of my mother's. He brought me news of her. "She was now quite well," he said, "and would soon be home again. How should I like that?"

"Of course I should like it of all things."

"And a little sister into the bargain?" questioned Mr. Spalding.

"And a little sister into the bargain," I replied.

"Is this woman kind to you?"

I had the fear of Mrs. Jenkins before my eyes, and answered "Yes." Cunning little dog! I had already seen enough of the world to know that "though all things were *lawful*, still, that all things might not at all times be quite *expedient*." Therefore I answered "Yes."

"He may well say that," interposed the housekeeper. "He's the sickliest, downiest little fellow I ever saw in my life; and I declare I'm worn to a skeleton attending upon him."

Mr. Spalding, if I might judge by his looks, seemed to consider *my* personal character involved in this statement, and turned to me wonderingly for an explanation.

Alas! what could I do? Under the influence of Mrs. J.'s keen



grey eye I had taken the first false step, and nothing now remained but to go on. I proceeded, therefore, to give the gentleman a very graphic, if not very truthful, account of the various maladies with which I was afflicted, and succeeded in bringing tears of sympathy for my sufferings into his good old eyes. The attacks, I assured him, were most frequent at midnight, "when tired nature had usually sunk to repose," (I pirated this last from Green's Third Reading-Book for Boys, and slyly passed it off as my own,) and so malignant were they in character, that I was frequently, indeed I might say *constantly*, compelled to summon Mrs. Jenkins to my bedside, whose gentle, patient, self-denying exertions in my behalf I found it difficult sufficiently to extol. As I was at it, I threw in a word about the dustman gratis, whom I represented as bearing me upon his herculean shoulders to my couch, when rendered helpless by pain, or overpowered by sleep.

Mr. Spalding was greatly pleased at all this, and, having told me a good deal about my mother, rose to depart. He said that he purposed leaving England immediately, but that when he had made his fortune I should see him again. He was a man of but few words, so he patted me kindly on the head several times, as I sat on a stool by the kitchen fire, hoped I'd be a good boy, and love my mother, (he needn't have hoped *that*.) put a sixpence into my hand,—which Mrs. Jenkins took from me soon afterwards,—coughed, blew his nose, and departed.

Dear reader, have *you* lost a father at a tender age? seen your mother torn from you a raving maniac, yourself shut up in a gloomy house, your companion a selfish, dishonest old woman? No kiss, no smile, no gratifying childish wish, no yielding to a childish caprice; nothing but dreariness and desolation before and behind, on the right hand and on the left? If this has been your position in early life, you can understand *my* feelings at the simple words, "Your mother is your own again."

Mr. Spalding had been gone rather better than a month when my mother returned. She arrived, as well as I can remember, at five o'clock in the day. Mrs. Jenkins left home some three hours previously; and, little to my surprise, has not since been heard of. The dustman appears to have followed her fortunes, as the stool at Highbury is now occupied by another; and they both are probably engaged at this very moment in plundering some wretched little boy in the absence of his mother.

## CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH I TELL SOMETHING OF  
MRS. BRIDGET O'LEARY, AND AN  
EXTRAORDINARY INSURANCE CASE.

I KNOW not how it was, but my father's friends seemed to have deserted us by mutual consent. With the exception of a second cousin of my mother's, nobody ever visited us. Why she thought proper to do so, I was at a loss to conceive, for she seemed as poor as Job, and not half so patient.

This lady, Mrs. Bridget O'Leary, was the widow of an Irish major, of an Irish regiment, who could boast, like "Rob Roy," of being descended from "a long and noble line of martial ancestry," and who had all, or nearly all, fulfilled the prediction of Him who "spake as never man spake,"—"they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." The O'Leary in question, appears to have fallen, not at the head of his own brave Inniskillingers, with his helmet on his brow and his sabre in his hand, but in a duel with a lieutenant of the South Mayo Rifles, at that time quartered in the classic neighbourhood of Loughrea. This gentleman (the lieutenant) acted very handsomely under the circumstances, and, among other things, had a neat tablet erected to his memory in old Kilconnell Church, duly setting forth all his virtues. If report spoke truly, their name was "Legion."

Mrs. O'Leary—strange as it may seem—was never very clear as to

the precise cause of the duel, but thought it arose out of a dispute which had for its origin a *shank of mutton*. They would appear to have differed as to the precise mode of rendering it most palatable for supper, and settled that difference by an appeal to arms.

The major, I have since learnt, was a regular fire-eater; a personal friend of "Fighting Fitzgerald" (whoever *he* may have been), and had drilled a hole through many a promising carcase in his day. He was great at the "saw handles," and published at one time a pamphlet upon their use. It was a bad speculation, however, in a monetary point of view, seeing that he had to pay the printer and publisher (happy men!) by withdrawing for a season from the public gaze. This was all the "saw handles" ever did for *him*, unless, indeed, we include that trifling matter—the loss of his life. Poor O'Leary! he was as brave as a lion, and never turned his back upon friend or foe. "Peace to his shade!" His widow was remarkably short, stout, and good-looking—nearly forty-five, and never denied it! She seemed a stranger to grief, and always spoke of the deceased major with the utmost respect and affection. English by birth, she was Irish through predilection and long residence in the country. She had contracted a slight brogue, and felt proud of it; and so, doubtless, did the defunct O'Leary himself. I believe she loved Ireland with her whole heart and soul, and never felt so happy as when speaking of "Irish right and Irish might, and Saxon shame and guilt." I listened to her with delight, and my young heart stirred within me as she related some dark deed of treachery to what she called "*her* bleeding country." Of course I soon was an especial favourite with her, and seldom left her side. Poor woman! she was kind to a fault; but as she often said, "kindness was a family failing, and the O'Leary's had certainly got a fair share of it." When the reader has seen a

little more of her and her brother-in-law, Stephen, he will probably say the same.

Months passed, and my mother grew stronger as our finances began to fail. The large old house was given up, and neat apartments taken in a quiet and comparatively inexpensive little street. Mrs. O'Leary offered to come and reside with us and pay half of the rent. My mother was delighted. Mrs. O'Leary would be such a cheerful companion. "My dear Biddy," said she, when that lady made the proposition, "My dear Biddy, I most gratefully accept your offer; it is just what I wished, and you will be everything to us: a sister to me, a mother to my (with a gush of tears) children, if God should be pleased to call me. As for rent, do not think of such a thing; it is I who will be *your debtor*. Your thirty pounds a-year, what is it? Nothing!—at least nothing in London. You have a certain position to support, a certain appearance to make, and these, I fear, cannot be done upon so small a sum. No, my dear, stay with us. You are aware that my poor darling husband had his life insured for £5,000, and this I have no doubt will be paid in a few weeks. Till then, let us wait patiently. Five thousand pounds! think of that Biddy! Why the very interest of it will meet all our wants, and we can reserve the principal for George and little Grace here."

"Ah! the poor dear major never did anything like that, Ellen, but then he didn't expect to die so soon. That spindle-shanked lieutenant was blind—*nearly* blind, I mean—and had it not been that the night before he died O'Leary drank six bottles of port and two of Madeira, and imprudently took in the morning, as he thought to 'steady his hand,' a glass of seltzer water, instead of dashing it strongly with brandy, he'd have made as pretty a spatchcock of that dirty sub as ever you saw in your life. Heigho! I suppose his hour was come, and its one com-



fort he died 'in harness' anyhow. Well, dear, I *will* come and stay with you. I can make myself useful, and will begin this very night. Yes, before this time to-morrow I shall have Georgey perfect at 'cribbage.'"

"Oh! for Heaven's sake," cried my mother, in alarm, for she had a great horror of cards; "do not teach him that—let it be something else!"

"Very well, my life; *whist*, if you like it better; but no, *one* night would never do for *that*. Come, what say you—'Beggar my neighbour?'"

"You mistake me, dear Biddy," said my mother, mildly; "I would rather he never learnt a card at all. I can't bear them."

"Oh! that's a different thing; of course, if *you* don't like cards we'll say no more about them; we shall, in fact, omit them from our list of useful acquirements altogether. But tell me, has he an ear, or a voice, or a head with a little brains in it, a quick eye, and a tolerably stout pair of legs? If so, I can teach him to sing, play, talk Italian and French, dance, fight, and make love. It will take him some time to be a proficient in all these, but you know the old adage, my love—'Rome wasn't built in a day.'"

"You can do as you please, Biddy, but no cards."

"Very well, then, I'll come to-morrow." And so she did.

Those were our happy days! How soon, alas! did they pass away.

Eight or nine weeks went by, and no missive from the insurance company. A strange misgiving rose up in the mind of the major's widow—they wouldn't pay the money. She communicated her suspicion to my mother, who, in her turn, became uneasy also. What were they to do? Wait another week and see if the company would give any sign of life. They *did* wait, and the company gave the necessary sign. It was, however, of an astounding character. The widow was right; they would

*not* pay, at least until a jury of their countrymen decided that they should. We were all three electrified, and well we might, for quick upon the heels of their refusal came a notice that we were at perfect liberty to bring the matter into the "King's Bench, or any other "Bench" we pleased, for that they would stoutly maintain, and were fully prepared to prove that my father laboured under a fatal disease when he perfected the policy of insurance, and what was more, *that he knew it*. This was a blow with a vengeance, it nearly crushed my mother to the earth. Nothing for us now but beggary, beggary, or—Philip Marston. And who was this Philip Marston? A drunken profligate, a blackleg, a *roué*, the son of a clergyman of large means in Somerset, long since dead—dead ere he knew of his son's infamy and crimes. Happy father! This man, I need not tell the reader, was the same I introduced to his notice in the opening chapter, and with whom we shall have more to do as this truthful narrative proceeds. But let me now go on.

Mrs. O'Leary soon recovered *her* blow. It seemed (I mean the blow) really to do her good. She became quite animated, and the old smile once more sat in her eye, and lighted up her whole countenance. My mother stared at her in amazement! Was she mad? Oh, dear, nothing of the kind. "Not a bit of it," as she herself would say, "never more sane in her life." Soon she bustled about, took down her bonnet and shawl; put on the former, wrapped herself comfortably in the latter, and quickly went downstairs. She returned in about an hour radiant with smiles and good humour, embraced my mother tenderly, kissed the baby and myself, and then proceeded to enlighten us as to (what up to the present was a perfect mystery), her own proceedings.

This was the explanation. She had been to a lawyer of great eminence, Mr. Knox Budgett an

odd name, by the way), and put him in possession of everything. That gentleman snapped his fingers at the Company, laughed, and said "he'd soon make all right;" told her to call again, and then politely bowed her to the door. What creatures we are! Mrs. O'Leary and my mother felt as if the £5,000 were already lodged to their joint credit in the Bank of England.

Mr. Budgett took the necessary steps, and the case came on for trial. "He was so fortunate" (these were his *own* words) "as to secure the services of his distinguished friend, Serjeant Gripper, who, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, had agreed to accept the to him nominal 'retainer' of fifty guineas, with five guineas 'refresher' for each day the trial lasted." My mother wondered where all the money was to come from, but the widow cheered her up most gloriously. It was an anxious time for us all. Indeed, I would say that it was an *awful* time, were it not that I have a decided objection to use strong language, at least in these pages. I repeat it, the trial came on! Sergeant Fluster was our opponent, with half-a-dozen silk and stuff gowns at his back. Old Baron Blossom, still alive and merry, took his seat on the bench precisely at ten; had the names of the jury called out, their proprietors duly sworn, and then Gripper, rising with a majestic frown, proceeded, according to Budgett, to demolish the case and the Company with one downright blow. Alas! for all human hopes! Fluster annihilated poor Gripper in less than five hours from the commencement of the trial, and the latter soon after abruptly left the court, covered with confusion and defeat.

To do justice to Gripper, however, I must say that the fault was none of his. He laboured right manfully to show that the deceased, at the time he insured his life, was not aware of the existence of the disease which so soon after proved fatal. That there were nearly one hundred diseases

of the heart, as well as could be ascertained, but all of a different character, and they were not without instances of some of the most eminent physicians the county could boast of being in many cases wholly unable to diagnose them. How, in thousands of instances, he would ask, was it possible for a man to know whether a disease were fatal or not? Perhaps the learned serjeant opposite would answer that! How many persons do we read of dropping dead in our streets and alleys who were never suspected of carrying about with them a mortal disease, and whose general health would even prevent such a suspicion existing? "My learned brother Fluster," he continued, "will doubtless point to Laennec and the stethoscope, but what light has either thrown upon this darkness? None, gentlemen, absolutely none; I say this advisedly, and after due deliberation, and I challenge the defence to prove the contrary."

Mr. Serjeant Gripper proceeded in this strain for about two hours, quoting largely from authorities as he went along, and concluded by a most earnest and touching appeal to the feelings and sympathies of the jury on behalf of a broken-hearted widow and *seven* helpless orphans, together with an innumerable number of minor and disconsolate relatives—offshoots from the parent stem!

Fluster rose, and the court was hushed. *Now* was *his* hour of triumph. Like the duke and the duke's guards at Waterloo, he bided his time; but the fatal moment was come, the magic words "Up and at them" spoken, and to it he went "tooth and nail." I regret that, being particularly hungry at the time, I was betrayed into the unpardonable weakness of rushing out and procuring at my own individual and proper cost a small penny tart, and having been denied re-admission to the court again and again by a short, blotchy-faced man, who smelt very strongly of undiluted gin (and who also seized and ate my tart), until Mrs. O'Leary, who occupied a prominent



place in the gallery exactly fronting the Bench, alarmed at my protracted absence, rushed out, and taking hold of me in a rather excited manner, led me back in triumph to my seat. I say that the whole occurrence or occurrences having extended over a period of one hour and twenty-five minutes, much of the learned serjeant's address was necessarily lost to me, and through me, to my heirs for ever. I understand, however, that it was a masterpiece of burning eloquence, fiery denunciations, and fierce personalities; closely resembling, in my humble judgment, many of the addresses of the present day.

Alas! Fluster had it all his own way. His speech was good, but his witnesses were better—doctors without patients and without character, who would have sworn anything they thought at all likely to advance the interests of their employer. These gentlemen (and they were extremely numerous) presented in court a highly respectable appearance, having been introduced to a fashionable West End tailor at the sole expense of the "Defence." I do not know, of course, what their (the "medicals") instructions were, but certainly had the lives of the Company, collectively and individually, been at stake, they could not have done more.

At length the judge summed up, and then, by the expression of Mr. Budgett's face (not a very handsome one at the best of times, but, when excited, really horrible) I saw that all was over with us. The jury retired—for appearance sake, I suppose—and then returned in three quarters of an hour with a verdict for the "defendants and all costs." And so ended the celebrated case of "*Allen v. The Great Moon and Stars Insurance and General Annuity Association*," duly incorporated by Act of Parliament, and having a capital of five millions sterling.

My poor mother was distracted. Five thousand pounds gone, lost beyond hope of redemption! 'Twas

really awful! She had not fifty pounds in the world, and Mr. Budgett coolly informed her that the costs on both sides would amount to at least treble that sum. For the first time the major's widow looked a little appalled. One hundred and fifty pounds, indeed! Where was that to come from? Heaven knew—not she. Had the affair come off in Galway how different would have been the result! The Company would, to be sure, have kept the £5,000, but *there*, Mr. Budgett would have been a bold man, indeed, to have thought of costs. Ah! they managed these things much better in Ireland!

A fortnight passed, and Mr. Budgett sent in his bill—£1781s.6d. There were scarcely so many shillings in the house, and we all knew it. Long faces were now the order of the day, but Mrs. O'Leary's was the first to resume its chubbiness. Somehow or another she never could sorrow long; it wasn't in her nature. Again she was off, this time for nearly a week. When she returned, she told us that we should hear no more of Mr. Knox Budgett, or his bill of costs. And she was right, for we never did.

I ought to have mentioned before, that all this time Mr. Philip Marston was a constant, and, as I could well see, a most unwelcome visitor. I was quick and penetrating, and observed the man. He was about two and thirty, and handsome, with a fine dark eye, and a huge black beard. I was not by any means, a timid little boy, but yet I am free to confess that there was not a single hair in that same beard that would not, at any moment have made me tremble.

I have already said, or rather, Mr. Marston has said (which, after all, is pretty much the same thing) that he was handsome. Handsome he undoubtedly was, but then it was a rather coarse and bloated style of beauty, and his manners, moreover, could hardly be said to be those of a gentleman. Mrs. O'Leary told me, and she was no

mean judge, that he savoured more of the stable than the drawing-room, and was fonder of *dipping* into ardent spirits than *diving* into the "Cares of Knowledge." He followed no profession, and lived, none knew how. He dressed well, kept a good table, "a fine horse, a fine house," and, like Master Wilford, now wanted but a "fine wife," and that wife was to be my mother. Poor woman! he was her greatest aversion; yet he succeeded, and by means which the reader already knows.

Mrs. O'Leary was now ill of fever, brought on by over-work, over-anxiety, and over-aborrence of Mr. Marston. And then the truth came out: she had sold her little annuity, to meet the demands of Mr. Budgett, and was now almost penniless. Had it not been for this, my mother would never have walked the dreary streets, an out-cast, or been driven to the necessity of accepting Mr. Marston for a husband. The poor widow's indomitable energy would have surmounted everything. I need hardly say that we visited her daily, and that these were our happiest moments. She ultimately recovered; and having now nothing further to detain her in London, set out for her adopted home—her own dear Galway. Marston married my mother, and then took us both to his house, Grace being sent to Highgate, where a respectable woman (different from Mrs. Jenkins) undertook to take charge of her for a small sum.

Of this man I must now speak the truth, though I do so with sorrow, shame, and indignation. Philip Marston was a spendthrift, a gambler, and a drunkard, half educated, coarse and violent. He was neither cruel nor vindictive, but he was headstrong, passionate, and reckless beyond expression, and, once inflamed by the demon drink, unmanageable and dangerous. At such times my mother would fly to her own room to avoid his fury, for in it he spared neither friend nor foe. I believe he really loved her though, and often re-

gretted, and strove to atone for his conduct. Hard-heartedness, or deliberate cruelty, could scarcely be attributed to him, and when the frenzy of the moment was over, he became as gentle and harmless as a child. But he had been loosely brought up, though the son of a clergyman, and the strong self-will, unchecked or uncurbed in boyhood, developed itself most fully in after years. The pampered darling of fond, foolish parents, whose every wish was gratified so soon as expressed, he grew up to manhood; not to become their pride and joy, but to send them down to the grave with broken hearts. Unstable and intractable, he entered upon life; and unstable and intractable he seemed as if he would quit it. To do him justice, however, he had me sent to a classical school in the neighbourhood, where I received the rudiments of what is called "a polite education" (though up to the present moment I have been unable clearly to ascertain what that means,) but, beyond this, he took no trouble about me. I might have grown up an atheist, a Turk, or a quaker, for all he knew or cared; or succeeded in becoming an exceedingly clever, or even brilliant little boy, without at all exciting his astonishment, or even attracting his attention. So long as my books and myself did not interfere with or inconvenience him, I might have been anything and everything I pleased. Beyond what I have already stated, he treated me as a purely imaginary being. I had no palpable existence, and lived but (to him) in the realms of fancy. To say that he could talk with me, walk with me, laugh with me, or do the most trivial thing with me, was simply out of the question. I was a nonentity, and nonentities do not usually talk or walk. Such being the case, I kept pretty much out of his way, and tried to preserve my own dignity (for I *was* dignified) and self-respect as much as possible. When not with my mother (and I was *always* with her when *he* was not present) I occupied myself with my books,



or slipped out into the crowded streets, where I sometimes met with rough treatment from boys of superior age and dimensions. At other times I used to call, in a fatherly sort of way, upon little Grace, into whose youthful mind I invariably instilled as much good and wholesome advice as I thought it could with safety digest.

And so the time passed, and Marston drank, and gambled, and dissipated worse than ever; and got heavily into debt; and was badgered, and dunned, and processed, and decreed, until at length he was made—what everybody saw he *would* be made—a ruined man.

And now I proceed to take up, or rather *unite*, the threads of my story, which, at the outset, have been necessarily broken. I began with a dark night and wet streets; a man pursued—the pursuer a weak boy. In other words, my stepfather and myself. He had returned home that night drunk, half-brutalised, and smarting under some heavy losses at play. 'Twas late, and he tramped slowly up the stairs, swearing as he went. My mother was patiently awaiting his return, and I was preparing my lessons for the following day. He ordered her to her room, with an imprecation so horrible that it still rings in my ears. She rose to obey him, and stooped to imprint a mother's kiss upon my forehead as she passed. I turned to look at Marston, and saw his eyes literally blaze with fury. He had bitten his under lip right through, and the blood, spurting out upon his chin, had trickled down his throat and chest. Instinctively I put out my arms to return my mother's embrace, and the action caused something to fall from her bosom. It was my father's portrait! With a yell, Marston sprang forward, but she was before him. "It is mine," she cried, with a sudden energy, that surprised even *me*, "I loved him a thousand times better than life—*with* life only will I part with it."

There was a struggle, short, but

decisive—a crushing blow—a faint cry—a falling body—two bounding steps upon the stairs, and away we go, father and son, into the streets, and through the very heart of the great city itself.

### CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO MR. STEPHEN O'LEARY.

IN order not to weary the reader—whose patience will yet be sorely tried, but who will doubtless submit to that trial with a proper grace, as all good readers do—I would ask him or her, as the case may be, to imagine twelve months to have now passed, to suppose also my mother *dead*, dead three months or more, and he or she will have passed over much that might pain, and little that could interest.

Are we with our stepfather? Oh, dear, no! That gentleman is now cooling his heels in a debtors' prison and cursing his evil fate. Who, then, has opened the door of pity to the houseless orphans? No less a personage than our old friend, Mrs. Bridget O'Leary. She, on hearing of my poor mother's illness started from Galway, and arrived in London a week previous to her death. She was with her to the last; received us at her hands as a precious charge, and then closed her eyes in peace. We were living in the neighbourhood of Pentonville, not luxuriously, but happily. Here Mrs. O'Leary gave lessons in music to all willing to receive and pay for them, and everything went on well. We had very comfortable apartments, but had it been otherwise, little Grace's sweet eyes and the widow's joyous face would have brought sunshine to the gloomiest garret. Added to this, the much-talked-of Mr. Stephen O'Leary was expected in town shortly, and the Major's widow was only too anxious that the Major's brother should be received with becoming dignity and respect. To this end some capital furniture was procured, half cash and half credit; tailors and milliners talked to;

and tradesmen and brokers invited to send in estimates for all manner of things, from chimney-glasses to kitchen poker. What a pity that my poor relative's heart and purse never *could* go together!

Three or four weeks and Mr. Stephen arrived. He was the tallest man I ever saw; had a splendid crop of hair upon his head, and a fine, honest, manly countenance to boot. Never did I see a frown darken that face, to me for ever dear, and never, I am persuaded, did an envious wish or a treacherous design find lodgement in that noble heart. And yet he was unfortunate, particularly and peculiarly so, and the more I saw of him the less I wondered at it.

It did not then exactly appear *why* Mr. O'Leary had transferred his long body from Galway to London; but my own impression at the time was that he had been making a practising target of some poor devil's body, and unfortunately for both parties had hit the "bull's eye." I subsequently learnt, however, that this was not precisely the case. The fact is, he was shockingly in debt, and Galway had become too hot to hold him. For years he had kept possession, *vi et armis*, of an old tumbled down barrack, dignified by the name of *Castle*, defying alike bailiff, proctor, and attorney. It would seem also that Stephen had, on one or two occasions, horsewhipped a grocer and a tailor, who had the effrontery to suggest a settlement of their accounts after waiting patiently for two years and a-half. Actions were talked of, but as actions in Galway are rarely seriously entertained, especially with an O'Leary for a defendant, our hero snapped his fingers at their threats and thought of them no more.

I believe Stephen was an early riser; at any rate he strode out one bright April morning (May would be more poetical, but even poetry must give place to facts) whistling merrily as he went, when suddenly bounded over a hedge and stood right before him three

bailiffs and four armed policemen. "Surrender!" cried one, and down he went. "Resisted!" shouted a second, and he shared his predecessor's fate. A third and a fourth followed in rapid succession. But what mortal could contend with such odds, even though that mortal stood six feet seven inches and the three-eighths? In a few moments O'Leary was surrounded, secured, and nearly borne off. It was early, and but few people were astir, and such as had arisen were at work in the fields, the nearest a half-mile off. But Stephen had excellent lungs, and, on this occasion at least, he used them to some advantage. One tremendous shout, that would have awakened the dead in any place save in Galway, an equally loud response, and a dozen or more rough, bare-legged individuals might be seen flying towards the scene of the recent conflict, their tattered garments flapping in the morning breeze, and their spades, shovels, and great pronged forks gleaming in the morning sun. Had Sir John Falstaff been there at the time, and that fear did not make him take to his heels, he would have had a glorious opportunity for filling up his ranks. The fellows cleared hedges, ditches, turf clamps, and all such minor impediments, yelling like tigers, and looking like Turks. Their presence, however, had no very visible effect upon the captors; they were accustomed to such things, and so, like veteran warriors, stood their ground.

"Give up the master, ye divils!" shouted a half-naked savage, with red, matted hair; "give him up, or by --- we'll let daylight through you!"

"Stand back, Jim Fagan," said one of the policemen, sternly, "stand back, and let us pass." He brought his musket, bristling with a bayonet, to the charge as he spoke. Jim gave a shout, strongly resembling the Red Indian's war-whoop. The bright blade of a shovel flashed upwards, towards the sky, and the musket and its proprietor lay harmless upon the ground. This was the signal



for a general onslaught; and to it they went, with the eagerness of bloodhounds. A quarter of an hour, and the ground was covered with maimed and bleeding wretches, whilst my worthy relative, mounted on a hack, which he met quietly grazing by the roadside, was hurrying towards Athenry, at a speed which defied everything that I know of, the modern steam-engine alone excepted.

The law at that time was rather lax in Galway, and so, beyond transporting two or three of the belligerents, whose character for honesty was rather equivocal, and cautioning the remainder, nothing ever was done in the matter. One of the men died soon afterwards of his wounds and bruises, but that was a trivial circumstance, and even his friends made light of it. "Sure he died in a good cause," they used to say, "and what more did he (the deceased) want?"

I liked O'Leary immensely, he was so lively and gay, and his brogue so rich, soft, and seductive. Young as I was, I often speculated as to the precise number of hearts he must have broken in Galway and its immediate vicinity; for, to my mind, he was the very *beau-ideal* of a "lady-killer." But Stephen, and to his credit be it spoken, never boasted. There was one thing he had an unaccountable affection for, and that was whiskey punch. He could take twelve stiff tumblers, and still be an "arch-deacon;" and I really never felt so happy as when I saw him enjoy himself to that extent.

"Mr. O'Leary," said I, one evening, as we sat together over the fire.

He looked up from a scorching hot glass of punch, which he had just mixed, and fixed his eyes inquiringly upon mine.

"How old are you?"

"Six-and-thirty next March, my boy."

"You do not look so old, sir," said I, with a grin, which I meant for a compliment.

"Why, no," he replied: "I fancy, George, I might strike off half a

dozen years, and nobody be the wiser."

"May I ask a favour of you, sir?"

"Certainly! What is it?"

"I am an orphan, sir, and so is little Grace; we have nobody to love us, nobody to love, save you and Mrs. O'Leary; we are happy here,—very, very happy,—and want but one thing to make us almost forget our mother."

"And what is that? Come, speak out, lad."

"Let us call you *Uncle*, and our own Mrs. Biddy, *Aunt*."

"Pon my conscience, George," exclaimed Stephen, with a laugh, "your request is a mighty odd one, and, at another time, it would puzzle me a bit to know what to answer. However, since you both *now* desire it, receive the protection and patronage of our illustrious name. Embrace your relatives."

We did so, crying all the while for very joy. The widow was likewise deeply affected, and Stephen himself was not wholly unmoved. I saw him walk to the window, thrust his hands deeply into his pockets, and commenced whistling "Garryowen and Glory," with so truculent an air that I thought the illustrious subject of the said song must, at some period or another of his eventful life, have seriously displeased my rather eccentric friend.

"And now, uncle and aunt, listen both. To-day I have completed my fourteenth year, and am therefore old enough and strong enough for anything, save idleness and dependence. Grace shall never work, (she is too delicate for that), but to-morrow, God aiding me, I commence the great battle of life."

Ah, what a scene was there! How did each face turn towards me in astonishment and dismay! how closely did the loving arms of Grace and Mrs. O'Leary encircle me, as if we were about to part for ever! while the Herculean form of Stephen, rising to its full height, and with an oath that I should not like here to repeat, encircled us all three, and held us tightly to his heart.

I shall never forget that quiet, still night; the nice, small parlour, the cheerful fire, the fine tabby cat, with her handsome, benevolent face basking and purring in its light and heat,—the candles, the books, the pictures, the chimney-glass; but above all, and before all, the little silent group, contemplating each other as if for the last time. Oh, that hour, that hour! How deeply is it graven upon my heart, never, never to be effaced!

I need hardly say that uncle and aunt (for so I shall now call them) were loud in their protestations, and earnest in their persuasions. All was in vain, however, and, without acquainting anyone with my precise determination, the next morning found me at the private residence of a general merchant, named Roberts, who lived in a large, finely-built house, in the neighbourhood of the Old Kent Road, and which is now, I regret to say, occupied by a notorious quack doctor. I walked by the place yesterday (21st September, 1863), and the name stared at me from a large brass plate as I passed.

My father had been this gentleman's medical adviser (I mean Mr. Roberts's, not the quack's), and was, moreover, intimate with the family, so that I felt rather bold in offering my services to him as an assistant. I rang the hall door-bell therefore, in a lively manner, and was quickly answered by a smart-looking young woman, with a small, pretty face, and a clear hazel eye.

"Is Mr. Roberts at home, my dear?" I asked, looking as large and important as I possibly could.

"No, *child*," was the response; "he has been at his business establishment, No. —, Cannon Street, City, these two hours. Do you think you will be able to walk all that way, my fine little fellow?"

Highly affronted at this mode of addressing me, especially as I spoke in a very manly and patronising sort of way, I left, without a word, for No. —, Cannon Street, City, first darting a look of mingled pity and contempt at her of the small face and clear hazel eye.

I was not long in reaching my destination, for I ran all the way, getting many a hearty cuff and curse as I came in unpleasant collision with elderly ladies, bent upon a morning walk, or trod upon the corns of testy old gentlemen.

I found No. —, Cannon Street, City, to consist of three large houses thrown into one (Unity Buildings, if I mistake not, lately occupied its site,) and presenting a very fine appearance indeed. It resembled, to my mind, a "monster house" of the present day, but shorn of its gegaw and gingerbread. I asked for Mr. Roberts (not quite so confidently as before), and was conducted by a demure-looking young man, with black hair, and very little shirt collar, to a door, which we approached by a short flight of steps, and communicating, as I could see, with an office of exceedingly small dimensions. I tapped nervously at the door, with a solitary knuckle, and was invited by a mild, gentle voice, to "come in, please." I accepted of this invitation, so courteously conveyed, and in a moment found myself standing in the presence of a gentleman, seated upon a very high stool, with a pencil between his fingers, and a long pen behind his ear. This was Mr. James Roberts, Merchant, of Cannon Street, City, and Old Kent Road.

Mr. Roberts was about fifty-eight or sixty years of age, of the middle height, stout, red-faced, and important-looking. He had a large head—a *very* large head indeed—plump, and—if the term can with propriety be applied to a head—"fat." On the top of this head was a large bare spot, of the diameter of an ordinary sized breakfast-saucer (oh, it's a fact!) perfectly denuded of hair, and shining, on that particular morning, like the surface of a well-polished mirror. The face was not handsome, neither was it ugly. It was a *passable*, common-place face enough—yes, that's exactly what it was—"passable and common-place." Sufficiently good-looking for a Cannon Street merchant (no



offence intended to the Cannon Street merchants, collectively or individually) with fifty thousand to his credit at the "old lady of Threadneedle Street" (*why* old lady? I want to know), an interesting young wife, and a charming young daughter,—but for nobody else that I am aware of. Like head and bare spot, it was large, and down along the jaws, to the very angles, were sparingly scattered what, I suppose, I must call *whiskers*; but which, if the reader will believe me, more closely resembled well saved hay. The forehead was broad, but not high; the nose short, but not snubby; the mouth large, and indicative of great resolution; the lips firm, the chin well set, and doubled; and the eyes of a rather greenish colour, (a little darker than a cat's, perhaps, sharp, keen, and penetrating. Never did I see a head more firmly fixed upon shoulders, and never did I see shoulders better adapted to support that head. Strength and breadth were their eminent characteristics.

As I looked at the man I experienced a sensation similar to that produced by a cold shower-bath when the valve is suddenly opened, for punishment, upon some unhappy wretch. My whole frame trembled violently, and my heart beat time against my ribs to hurried music. Had Mr. Roberts been tall and savage-looking, or small, or decrepit, or hunch-backed, or blear-eyed—or, in short, anything but what he really was—I should not have minded. But, as he sat upon that stool, calmly awaiting my convenience to speak, I confess that his quiet, matter-of-fact bearing was too much for me. I was but a child, yet I saw at a glance him with whom I had to deal.

"I wish to speak with Mr. Roberts, please, sir," said I, when I found my tongue.

"My name is Roberts, sir," said he, with a slight inclination of the head.

"I beg your pardon, sir," I stammered, "but—but—did you ever know a person named Allen?"

"I have known many persons of

that name, sir; it is not an uncommon one."

"I mean a *Dr.* Allen, sir," I continued; "he died very suddenly, if you remember—in an hospital, sir, not far from this place."

Mr. Roberts thought for a moment ere he said, "Oh, yes! a gentleman of that name was my medical adviser. He died, I believe, as you say, suddenly, and under peculiar circumstances. May I ask if your business here is in any way connected with *him*?"

These latter words came out freezingly enough, but I had made up my mind for the worst, and so went on.

"I am his son, sir; there are two of us, little Grace and myself, and we are now dependent upon poor relatives. I have thought of assisting them if I can, but hardly know where to turn. You, sir, being my father's friend, I——"

"There is an institution," said Mr. Roberts, interrupting me, and speaking very measuredly; "there is an institution in Gray's Inn Road, which relieves destitute orphans of good character, and as I presume you both come under that denomination, I will give you a note to the secretary, with a view to having your names brought under the notice of the committee of management. If their funds admit of it, they will probably give you ten shillings. I shall write the note this evening, and you can call for it at any hour you please in the morning."

Mr. Roberts then directed his attention to his "ledger," and commenced a vigorous onslaught upon a whole army of figures.

It is now many years since he spoke those words, yet I remember them as distinctly as if it had been but yesterday. I remember *how* he delivered them; the tones of his voice; the quiet wave of his pencil as he turned to his books; the rapidity with which he ran his eye up the credit side of his cash account; and if I remember all these, *can* I forget how *I* stood before him, no longer the little crouching, trembling, frightened suppliant, but

the high-souled boy, smarting under the sense of unmerited insult!

"I am no beggar, sir," said I, with a crimson cheek and a flashing eye; "I need not money, and I ask for none. My father was a gentleman, and I would die rather than solicit any man's charity. What I seek is *employment*,—something by which I may help those who have already helped me. I thought of you as one likely to need an assistant, and——"

"How old are you?" he asked, turning suddenly round, and measuring me with his eye from head to foot (it hadn't far to travel), with an expression that plainly said, "Don't attempt to deceive me—its no use."

"Just fifteen, sir."

"Hem! Do you know anything?"

"I have read Horace, sir, and Virgil, and Sallust, and——"

"Yes, but (very slowly, and not at all astounded at the extent of my information) what can you *do*? Knowledge is very well, let us see how you can use it. I would much rather you had told me what you knew of English grammar, of Jackson's Book-keeping, and of "Lloyd's Counting-House made Plain."

"I spell well, sir," I continued, determined at last to make a firm stand: "know arithmetic fairly, and can keep accounts, I am sure, by single entry."

"*Single entry*," repeated Mr. Roberts, contemptuously; "Master Allen, that is a term we London merchants don't understand: but come, I am willing to give you a trial. Take that sheet of note-paper—not that, the other. Now, sit down at the opposite side of this desk, and write me a letter of application for the post of junior assistant in our book-keeper's office. I can then judge of your general style and handwriting."

I obeyed with fear and trembling, and succeeded, after twenty minutes (twenty minutes of intense agony, heart, soul, mind, and body alike participating in it) in producing a tolerably neat, well-worded, well-written letter. This I handed him with a white, anxious face, which was re-

flected back upon me, in all its ghastliness, by a small looking-glass at the opposite end of the office. He read it carefully twice or three times, looked at me, hummed a hymn-tune, and then said—

"You do not write badly, and you express yourself rather well; but something more is necessary, *experience*. This can only be acquired by long, laborious, painful *practice*. I have found it so; so has everybody. That there is no royal road to learning, is as true of the meanest shopboy as it is of the "Fellow" of Oxford or Cambridge. I tell you this, young man (young man! oh!) candidly, because you have said that just now which pleases me. 'You did not come to *beg*, but to *work*. I like this spirit, and I encourage it whenever and wherever I can. I would rather spend a pound upon you, or such as you, than a penny upon one of those poor, whining little beggars who infest our streets. I *will* help you, provide upon inquiry I find that you deserve it. What clergyman do you know?"

"The Rev. ——"

"Ah! no Dissenting clergyman?"

"No, sir."

"Well, that doesn't matter much. I am a Primitive Methodist myself, but not quite so intolerant as some people suppose me. I will see Mr. ——, talk over the matter with him, and you can call here to-morrow, when you shall be told the result." And, having so said, Mr. Robert once more addressed himself to his books and accounts.

I stood for a moment at the door, my hand upon the handle, pleased yet confused, and sorely troubled. The sudden change in Mr. Roberts's manner and intentions took me naturally by surprise, and the immediate prospect of active and profitable employment was not without affording me considerable satisfaction; but with this came the crushing thought that if I became an inmate of the establishment I should, in all probability, be separated from those I held most near and dear on earth.



I returned home, therefore, saddened and depressed; ate my dinner in silence; retired for half-an-hour (for I felt every instant the tears gushing to my eyes), and throwing myself upon the bed, and burying my face in the pillow gave, way to the sorrow that now filled my soul.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### SOMETHING OF MR. ROBERTS AND HIS PEOPLE.

THE next morning, and punctually at the hour named, I found myself at Mr. Roberts's door. Our interview was short, but decisive. I was engaged at a salary of twenty-five pounds per annum, with board and lodging, for the first two years. After that, it was to increase according to merit.

I went home and told everything, and great was the consternation of all then and there assembled. They seemed to look upon my conduct in the same light as picking a pocket, or, at any rate, sweeping a crossing; and Mrs. O'Leary, who was usually very demonstrative, especially whenever she considered the dignity of the family was concerned, at once bristled up, and expressed her intention of seeing Mr. Roberts, and having the engagement, so thoughtlessly entered into, cancelled without delay. But Stephen quietly stopped her, observing, and with much truth, that a bargain was a bargain, and that he'd as soon break his neck any day as break his word. There I believed him.

I will not weary the reader by telling him how the week passed, of the kisses we interchanged, and the tears that we shed at parting. Mr. O'Leary accompanied me to Cannon Street, and gave me up in due form to the head book-keeper, a thin, sharp-looking little man of about sixty, with a great deal of iron-grey hair upon his head, and a great deal of nose upon his face. Stephen introduced himself as Mr. O'Leary, of the county of Galway, and told him that the youth he held by the hand was a near relative of

his own, and a very admirable boy to boot. His declaration elicited from the head book-keeper the gratifying intelligence that his name was Snaggs, and that the "admirable boy" in question, by attention to his business, and a respectful demeanour towards his superiors (himself, of course, amongst the number) might one day get on. To this my uncle replied that he trusted the "admirable boy" would always conduct himself as a Christian and a gentleman, and, as such, never fail in his respect to those whom Providence had placed over him.

Having bowed very pleasantly and very politely to the old gentleman, and told him that "should his wandering footsteps ever stray" towards Galway, he would be happy to see him in the home of his fathers, O'Leary Castle, he withdrew, his fine manly bearing producing a most favourable impression upon all the clerks as he passed through the outer offices into the street.

And now I am afloat upon the great ocean of life, where so many have been suddenly and hopelessly wrecked. Let me hold fast by the rudder of sincerity and truth, and all *must* go on well. With a "single eye," and a simple, earnest faith in God, and God's promises, what has man or boy to fear?

There were a great many young men and boys in Mr. Roberts's establishment, whose salaries varied from five to fifty pounds a year. Mr. Snaggs, I found, by entries in the ledger, drew sixty-two pounds, ten, per quarter, and placed the ten shillings in a money-box, which went to the support of some missionary station, which I remember was a great many thousand miles away. I thought this odd at the time, seeing that there were some millions of souls at home, perishing for lack of that Word which Mr. Snaggs, and those who thought with him, were so liberally and thoughtfully supplying to their antipodies. But now I know better.

I learnt that the young men boarded in the house, and slept out-

side, and that the boys (I was, greatly to my mortification, one of this latter class) boarded in the house, and slept *inside*. This arrangement seemed to agree but indifferently with the former, for when they came to Cannon Street in the mornings, the majority looked as if they had had no sleep the previous night. They yawned frequently during the day, coughed, expectorated (I beg the reader's pardon for using the word), and, when the eye of Mr. Roberts, or the eye of Mr. Roberts's deputy, was for a moment withdrawn from their pale, suffering faces, rushed up to various show-rooms to execute, with the utmost promptitude, a great number of imaginary orders, and spent the time in drinking from a cracked tea-cup a white, effervescing matter, which I have been since led to regard as Seidlitz powder, which, at the time, I was disposed to look upon as something else. I remarked too, that those gentlemen exhibited an irrepressible desire to execute orders of a *Monday* morning; and this gratifying circumstance arose, doubtless, from the fact, that Mr. Roberts's customers preferred patronising him on that day to all others. Young men, in monster and other houses, is not this the case? Undoubtedly. No wonder then, if you look pale, wretched, and weary on that day, and pray fervently for night or *Sunday*.

After a week's experience of men, boys, and things, I arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Roberts was wholly unaware of my existence; that Mr. Snaggs, in whose office I was, sometimes nodded to me of a morning as he hung up his coat and hat, and rarely spoke to me during the day; that Mr. Rogers, the general superintendent, had a tipsy wife, who frequently waylaid him in the evenings on his way to his lodgings, for they lived apart, and demanded a shilling to procure bread for herself and her starving family; that Mr. Rogers never replied to Mrs. Rogers, but walked on, apparently as unmoved as the flags under his feet; that

Mrs. Rogers on divers occasions assaulted Mr. Rogers, and that Mr. Rogers was never known to retaliate; that Mrs. Rogers's story about the starving children was all a fiction, as she never had a child save one, a dissipated youth of twenty, who, after whitening his father's locks and nearly breaking his father's heart, was now employed as a waiter at an oyster-shop in a remote corner of the City, where his services no doubt were properly appreciated. About the same time I became also conscious of the fact that Mr. Jones, the gentleman with the small allowance of shirt collar, was a sneak; that Mr. Clarke was a hypocrite; and that an overgrown, awkward-looking boy, named Jackson, couldn't be depended on. I now know that Master Jackson's father had been a porter in the "house," and have a distinct recollection of Master Close twitting him with the fact. From that day forth Master Close was no favourite of mine.

There was one gentleman, and only one of two, who succeeded in winning my affection at Mr. Roberts's, and under his notice I was frequently brought. This was Mr. Loader, the cashier, a mild-looking gentleman of about five and fifty, with narrow shoulders and a stoop. He was, I understood, a widower with a family, entirely of girls, who were very pretty and very amiable, and lived cosily together in a nice little house in the neighbourhood of the Euston-road. Mr. Loader took a fancy to me, and seemed pleased with any little attention my subordinate position enabled me to show him. We were frequently together, as he borrowed me from Mr. Snaggs for an hour each day, to count and check off his cash previous to lodging it in the Bank of England. I thought those hours very happy ones, and returned with somewhat saddened feelings to my own office and Mr. Snaggs.

I had not been there more than a month when the cashier told me that he liked me very much, and would befriend me to the extent of his power. He expressed a



hope, moreover, that I would give myself at once to God and His service, and to rest satisfied that then "all things would work together for good." He sometimes kept me for five minutes while (after carefully bolting the door,) he engaged in simple, fervent prayer in my behalf, and ended by committing me to the care of Him who is peculiarly the "Father of the fatherless." And from all this I concluded that Mr. Loader was a pious man.

Mr. Snaggs was very irritable, and an erasure, however slight, or a mistake, however unimportant, was sure to draw down upon me his tongue and temper. He was fretful, garrulous, and I am persuaded, inwardly dissatisfied with himself and every other member of the human family. I never ventured to ask him if he were married, but often thought that if he were, I could pity his wife and children from the bottom of my heart. He was not what is termed a passionate man, far from it, but there was a biting sarcasm about everything he said that to me was ten thousand times more awful than the fiercest denunciations or the most terrible reproofs. He often cut me to the quick at the very time that I was doing every thing in my power to give him satisfaction. How I merited all this his own heart best knew, for never did child strive harder, or watch closer than I strove and watched to save him one moment's pain, anxiety, and trouble. Yet I bore it all, quietly and unrepiningly bore it. No murmur or complaint ever escaped my lips, and I am now thankful that in the midst of much evil and little good, I can look back upon that time and say so.

Mr. Loader took me home with him one evening to tea, and as we went along he told me that he had been a widower for eight years, and that his late wife was neice to a rich bishop to whom she never spoke, and cousin to a noble earl whom she never saw. This was not said in a boastful manner, but rather as if to beguile the time,

and for nothing else. His house was small, but extremely neat. There was a nice grass plot before the door, and a beautiful little garden in the rear. When I got inside I was struck with the extreme simplicity of everything I saw; the tables, chairs, pictures, all so becomingly plain and pretty.

There were three girls in the parlour, and the fourth, the housekeeper of the family, soon joined us, quite red and rosy from the tea-urn. The eldest was Miss Jane, the second Susan (and this was the housekeeper,) the third Mary, and the fourth Fanny. How well did the names correspond with the furniture—pretty but plain!

"This is our friend, George Allen," said Mr. Loader, by way of introduction; "My daughter Jane and her sisters."

I shook hands with the girls all round, and tried to look as if I were used to it.

"Are you not late, father?" asked Mary, taking his hat and putting it out of sight.

"A few minutes, my child—not more. Fletcher and I had a talk together before coming away, and I dare say that delayed us a little."

"Oh! poor Mr. Fletcher," cried all the girls in a breath, and how is he?"

"Never saw him look better," replied their father. "Why he's absolutely getting fat."

"Oh! what nonsense you talk, papa!" said Susan; "Mr. Fletcher is a perfect mountain of flesh. I never saw anybody like him in my life."

"Probably not, my love," replied Mr. Loader, cheerfully; "but George and I, who have walked nearly two miles, would be glad to see our tea just now."

A pleasant smile, a quiet opening and closing of doors, and tea was upon the table. I think I never enjoyed a tea more in all my life. I sat near Fanny, the youngest, and helped her to cake (nice hot cake, too!) and bread and butter, and shrimps and periwinkles, and felt really and truly happy. After tea, one of the girls

read a chapter from the Bible, every word of which fell distinctly upon my ears, and some of it, I trust, reached my heart.

In the course of the evening, Mr. Loader told me many things about the Roberts family, which I had not previously known. For instance, that the tall, stout, fair young man, who called two or three times a week at Cannon-street, was Mr. Richard Graham, Mr. Roberts's nephew, a very wealthy, careless, good-humoured, off-hand kind of youth, who could not be induced to follow any profession, and was at the present moment leading, if not a very dissolute, at any rate, a very idle sort of life. He had been frequently offered a partnership in the concern, but had always declined, on the ground of his dislike to, and unsuitability for, business. He occupied furnished lodgings in St. James's, and was a constant frequenter of the theatre and ball-room. Mr. Loader sighed as he said this; for, on principle, he was opposed to all such places of amusement, and thought that no "good thing" could come out of them. Perhaps on this particular point, the good man was a little narrow-minded and prejudiced.

But Graham was a favourite with him, nevertheless. Another gentleman, whom I had but once seen, and who had a short time ago entered the family, apparently to reside there permanently, was a Mr. Stephen Dorricks, and for whom Mr. Loader appeared to entertain the profoundest respect and esteem. He did not seem to know very much about him, or what precise position he was to occupy at Mr. Roberts's, but believed that he should superintend the education of that gentleman's only daughter, who was by a former marriage. He spoke of this stranger, Dorricks, as a man of sincere piety and sterling worth, and one who was likely to be very useful in his "day and generation." He was a great scholar, too, and had travelled, and was much looked up to by Mr. Roberts, and, indeed, by all who knew him. Further than this, Mr. Loader

could not go. He did not say much of Evelyn Roberts (the daughter), as I had seen her frequently, and had already begun to worship her—at a distance. She knew my history, and had a very faint recollection of seeing my father once or twice at the Old Kent-road. He was an old friend, she said, of her dear, lost mamma, and, as such, she should always cherish his memory. To this circumstance, I attribute much of the kindness and consideration I received at her hands. But to return.—

"Is Mr. Dorricks a clergyman, sir?" I asked.

"Oh dear, no, but he is quite as good. Should you like to be introduced to him?"

"Oh, of all things," I replied.

"Well, that is easily managed. To-morrow is the anniversary of Fanny's birth-day, and Mr. Dorricks and a few other friends will be here. You can come."

Of course I felt very thankful to Mr. Loader. I like his daughters very much. They had all auburn hair, and soft brown eyes, and such a sweet and gentle expression in them, that their faces seemed to me the handsomest faces in the world. But Fanny was the beauty, and the pet of the family; for all families have a beauty, and a pet. Which of my readers will dispute that?

This young lady was about thirteen, extremely retiring in her manners, with a very lovely, but a very serious little countenance. She had not much colour in it, and that colour was ever varying, varying. She scarcely spoke during the whole night, and I saw that her elder sister watched her anxiously, and that once or twice, when she seemed in pain, and uttered a low moan, Miss Jane gently drew her to her bosom, and laid her head upon her shoulder, as tenderly as if she had been a sleeping infant. This little incident touched me sensibly, and I thought of it all the way home.

The next day the "pet" was seriously ill, so that there was no party, and, of course, no Dorricks, and months passed before I had an



opportunity of making his acquaintance.

A whole year went by at Mr. Roberts's, but nothing of any particular moment occurred. I grew in stature, and I think in favour also. Mr. Snaggs was as cross, and as irritable as ever; but this could not be helped, as, do what I would, or could, the results were, in his case, precisely the same. I despaired of making anything of him, but still, I trust I did my duty by him in all things.

Miss Eveleen was often in Cannon Street. Her father evidently wished her to be near him, and she has often sat for hours in that memorable little office by his side. She was very friendly with us all, and was, in turn, an especial favourite with everybody.

"George," said she, one day, giving me a note which Mr. Roberts wished to be posted without delay, [Jackson wanted to take it to the office, but I sternly bade him put it down, and shortly afterwards bore it there myself], "George, I must call upon your little sister, Grace, and your aunt, very soon. I have heard of them from Fanny Loader, and regret that I have not been able to see them sooner."

I bowed; and, with a smile, Eveleen went away. She *did* call, and they were all delighted with her. Stephen pronounced her perfection itself, and I had no idea of contradicting him.

I may mention, in passing, that Mr. O'Leary was now regularly employed upon a sporting paper of some repute, and was earning a decent livelihood. I hope its proprietor prized him as he deserved.

I seldom saw Philip Marston, my step-father. He was at this time living, I believe, somewhere about Holloway, rioting, and dissipating, whenever and wherever he could, without one thought of Grace or me, or of his own future.

He had been "abroad" for nearly twelve months, and somebody said that he had there discovered the principle of "perpetual motion." My previous knowledge of the gentleman, however, led me to regard this statement as exceedingly improbable, and I have never since had occasion to alter my opinion.

Jackson (the large boy) and I, greatly to my disgust, slept together. He was always praising everybody, from Mr. Roberts himself, down to the boy who cleaned the knives and forks. According to his statement, we were all a perfectly white flock, he being the only black sheep amongst us. I often thought that he meant the very reverse, but I felt I ought to try and give him credit for sincerity, though I own I found it hard enough to do so.

He was a huge fellow, this same Jackson, tall, bony, very much freckled, and, to do him nothing but simple justice, marvellously ill-favoured. He was perfectly aware of this, and often told me so with a smile of the sweetest resignation.

Mr. Jackson was fond of soup, if pea-soup, all the better, and would go any length to secure a bowl full of it in the evening, after the toils and troubles of the day. Some men drown their cares and forget their sorrows in gin. Jackson, "wiser in his generation," did both in—soup.

He was seldom prepared to devote any attention to it until I was about retiring to my pillow, and was not unfrequently forced to resort to the process of re-heating it over our common fire. This, often repeated, became to me a complete nuisance, and I told him so. Meekly he put away his little saucepan, and I never saw it more. I thought, however, that from that night he regarded me with an interest I had never observed before.

## THE VENICE OF THE NORTH.

WHEN I was in Sweden there was much talk of an approaching and very necessary reform in the constitution of the country. The interests of all classes were not equally represented in the Diet, the hereditary legislation of the nobles was considered an abuse; and various other grievances made the public cry out loudly for a radical change in the system of government. Meetings were held in the town, and even popular demonstrations in the street were hinted at as more than possible. Wherever I went I heard the question of reform discussed by political wiseacres, some of whom advocated a complete change, others a partial change, and the rest no change at all.

The crisis, however, had not yet arrived; the scheme was ripening, but had not reached perfection. Two months later the proposed measures of reform were decided on by an immense majority of votes, and acknowledged amidst general acclamation.

It is as part and parcel of the old state of things that the ceremonies which I am now about to describe seem to me especially interesting. I was fortunate enough to arrive in Stockholm just as the Diet had met—as it does every five years—and to be a spectator of some of the formalities which mark that event. The first in order was the reception by the House of Nobles of the three other states of the realm, namely—the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants.

The Riddarhus, or house of assembly of the nobles, where this ceremony took place, is a long ugly brick building with very large windows. The hall contains the armorial shields of about three thousand Swedish nobles; the arms are painted on little square metal plates, and are hung so close together that they seem completely to cover the walls. I noticed one

shield, which had a broad black line painted across it diagonally; it was that of the Ankerström family, a member of which was the assassin of Gustavus III. On a raised dais at the end of the hall is a handsomely carved chair, in which the Lord President sits; before him there is a table, covered with blue cloth, and on it I observed an instrument like a hammer, with a long handle; it is intended for the President to bang the table with when he wishes to enforce silence on his brother senators. There are a few benches on either side of the President's chair, but the majority are ranged facing it. On the day to which I am referring we entered the Riddarhus before eleven o'clock, and having ascended a wide staircase took our seats in a gallery provided with three rows of benches, similar to those used by the legislators below. Several people had already collected, but unoccupied places were still to be found in the front row, and here we installed ourselves at once. From this gallery, which is reserved for spectators, and is situated in front of the President's chair, what passes in the hall may be seen and heard to great advantage. When we came in there was no business being transacted; it was evidently a moment of relaxation for the distinguished assembly, whose members had got together, some in pairs, some in little groups, and all of them talking in a most animated way. As to their dress, about a quarter of those present wore uniform, the rest were in plain clothes. The President himself, in a uniform of blue and gold, lay lolling back in his grand chair, conversing freely with some men who stood by him, while throughout the house there ran a continuous chattering buzz. Some minutes passed thus, and meanwhile I took the liberty of asking a Swedish officer who sat next me



to point out some of the celebrities present, if there should happen to be any. He very good-naturedly complied, and, with the help of the fore-finger of his right hand, indicated sundry heads—bald, woolly, and sleek—to each of which he attached a long name. One of them alone I recognised; it was Oxenstierna. The present count of that name is a descendant of the Chancellor Oxenstierna, the favourite friend of Gustavus Adolphus, and governor of the kingdom during the minority of Christina. My informant also told me that he himself, being the head of his family (a noble one), would, in two years time, be entitled to take his seat in the hall beneath us, and have a voice in the debates. However, in order to do this it is necessary to have completed your twenty-fifth year, and he was then but twenty-three; so that for the present, of course, he could not be admitted. He did not refer to the rumours of a probable reform; perhaps he knew nothing of it; and the change, when it came, as it did a short time afterwards, took him by surprise.

An usher soon appeared, and, going up to the President, apprised him of some important fact; for that worthy, looking stern, and sitting erect in his chair, smote and resmote the table with his hammer. In obedience to this summons the flood of conversation began to subside, and one or two supplementary bangs reduced it to a mere whisper. Members quickly ceased their discussions and separated, each to his customary place; the usher tripped down the centre passage and vanished through the door underneath the gallery in which we sat. A few moments of suspense succeeded, and silence reigned supreme till the muffled sound of approaching feet was heard. Then the President rose from his chair majestically and stood beside the table in an attitude of dignified attention; the whole house also stood *up en masse* to await the arrival of a deputation from the chamber of burghers. Stretching my neck

as far as I could over the gallery, I saw enter the same usher as had been in before, and, following him, a number of men dressed in black and wearing white ties. From my elevated position I had a capital view of the tops of their heads and the tips of some of their noses, but that was all. When the spokesman of the deputation (who carried a paper in his hand) had arrived in front of the President, he bowed low, and received a similar salutation in return. He then began reading his speech in a hurried manner. A soon as it was concluded the President, after a preliminary hem or two, commenced his reply. His voice was clear and musical, and his utterance most distinct. The Swedish language is very pleasant to hear when spoken as he spoke it; there are none of those harsh gutturals which so grate on the ear unaccustomed to German. When he, too, had ceased speaking bows were again exchanged, and the members of the deputation turned and marched from the hall.

Another interval of silence followed, broken as before by the sound of coming numbers, and then came the usher, this time heading a deputation from the Chamber of Clergy. The members of it were dressed exactly like the burghers who had preceded them; the black coat and white tie were there, but nothing to mark the difference in their profession. The speech and the reply to it having been made, they retired to make way for the deputation from the peasants, which had still to be introduced. I was ignorant enough, when I heard the word peasant, to imagine that a crowd of awkward clods, armed with spades and pitchforks, might possibly come trotting in, treading on each others' heels, and pulling their forelocks in utter abashment. But this fanciful illusion was only momentary. The fourth state of the realm entered in as orderly a fashion as the others; its members were dressed in the same way, and looked every whit as respectable. In truth, the term peasant seems

here rather misapplied; as its real signification, in this country, is a farmer who cultivates his own land. Very often his land consists of a large and fertile tract, and altogether he is quite a man of substance; while many a scion of a noble family, though at liberty to call himself count or baron, has barely enough to live on. The peasants having taken their departure, the President resumed his seat with a look of relief, and the tide of talk, now that there was no longer any necessity for restraint, flowed on again. As I was leaving the Riddarhus, I paused a moment on the flight of steps which led to the entrance, to bask in the genial rays of the sun, which, for a wonder, was shining warm and strong. While there, a party of men came out, and descending the steps, set off walking together; there must have been twenty of them, at least. I found that they were a deputation from the nobles, on their way to the House of Assembly of the Burghers, to pay them a visit, in return for the one they had just received. In the course of the day, deputations were also sent by the nobles to the Houses of Assembly of the two other states, who afterwards had to visit each other; so that it must have been a busy day for them all.

But these doings were merely preparatory to what followed the next morning at the royal palace; when the king in person received the four states, and made them a speech. Prince Oscar, the brother of the king, was kind enough to send us tickets of admission, through one of my relations, with whom he is acquainted. These tickets were of two kinds; one of them would admit the bearer to the Church of Saint Nicholas, to hear a sermon preached before the king by some well known church dignitary; the other would entitle him to a seat in the grand reception hall of the palace, where the speech from the throne was to be delivered.

The yellow tickets for the church were rather indiscriminately bestowed, but the blue ones for the palace hall were difficult to obtain,

and we thought ourselves uncommonly lucky in being thus easily provided with both. Yet the holders of yellow tickets only had the advantage of going to church dressed as they chose, while for those who claimed admission to the other ceremony evening dress with the inevitable white tie was *de rigueur*. Now, the evening costume of Englishmen is to my mind at all times unbecoming, but it is also in every way unsuitable when worn at eleven o'clock in the morning with the thermometer down at freezing point. I felt cold and cranky while performing my toilet, nor did it improve my temper to discover that my tail coat, owing to having been carelessly packed, was tumbled and creased to an alarming extent. I put it on, quite conscious of looking like a battered scarecrow, and huddling a great coat over it, set out for the church. Numbers of people had already collected outside the edifice, and in the interior the side aisles were crowded; the seats in the centre aisle were reserved for the members of the four States, who entered almost immediately after us, and with much pushing and shoving managed to subside into their respective places. I never saw such a quantity of men with spectacles on assembled together in my life. A good optician ought to make his fortune at Stockholm.

The service had not yet commenced; every one was in a state of pleasurable anticipation, smiling, whispering, and standing on tip-toe to look about. Few, indeed, seemed to be paying any heed to the performance of the organist, who was, I fancy, extemporising; for surely no composer can wilfully have perpetrated the rambling, groaning, unmeaning piece of music which we listened to with impatience that morning. Presently there entered a procession of men gaudily attired in red cloaks. Their hats (of that form which is vulgarly known as chimney-pot) were ornamented with a deep band of gold lace, and a bunch of feathers stuck



in front. They stalked in two and two, to line the passage for his majesty, who was now approaching from the palace. A minute or two afterwards a general rustle and commotion announced his arrival, and I beheld a tall man walking rapidly up the church towards the altar. He wore a dark blue, tightly fitting uniform, and his sword clinked loudly on the pavement as he strode along with firm but springy step. Having made a deep obeisance, meant, I suppose, for the bishop who was about to preach, he took his seat to the right of the altar, underneath a canopy, which was situated directly opposite the spot where I was standing. It was thus easy to note that he had a broad, intellectual forehead, eyes grave but sympathetic, and a mouth totally concealed by a black moustache and beard. The organ voluntary now ceased, and a melancholy hymn was sung by the choir, of which the principal merit was its brevity. Some prayers followed, and then the bishop began his sermon, which I suspect was neither brilliant nor soul-stirring, as every one, king included, looked very listless. My friends and I soon quitted the church, though we succeeded in doing so with some difficulty, and went to breathe the fresh air in the court of the palace, which by this time was full of people come to see the sight, such as it was. The court itself is a vast sombre quadrangle, but on this occasion it looked lively enough, with gaily dressed ladies and artillery officers in shining helmets, figuring about. We had not been long here when the king returned from the church, and after this the carriages of the ambassadors drove up in rapid succession. Making our way to the foot of the grand staircase, we mounted through a line of armed soldiers to the first floor, and traversed a succession of state apartments, in the last of which we were consigned to the care of a courtly chamberlain. We followed him into a magnificently proportioned hall, rich in marbles and gilding, with a throne at one end, seats facing it for the four

States, and spacious galleries around the walls for the accommodation of spectators, a few of whom had already arrived and established themselves there in very advantageous positions. "Place yourselves where you please in that gallery," said our conductor in French, and thither we accordingly ascended, of course selecting the most desirable places we could see. A regular stream of people now began to flow in, and the poor chamberlain seemed to be having a tiresome time of it: no sooner had he ushered in one party, and directed them where to go, than a host of new comers would claim his attention. Once, a stray lady, with an anxious face and a brand new bonnet, might have been seen earnestly addressing him; apparently, she was begging for his protection in that large, strange place. There was something pleading in her gesticulations, something frantic in the waggings of her head, but ere long a fresh inroad of ardent visitors had swept her and her pleadings off to the other end of the hall, while the heartless functionary to whom she had applied skipped away to attend to others. I had the satisfaction soon afterwards of seeing this lady squeeze herself and her crinoline into an excellent place in the opposite gallery, whence she reconnoitred the assembled company with the aid of her ivory lorgnettes. It is astonishing how well women can take care of themselves when they are quite alone.

Besides the galleries intended for ordinary spectators there were two smaller ones on either side of the throne: that on the right of it was reserved for the members of the diplomatic body, and that on the left for the queen, and the other princesses, with the ladies attached to the court. All these distinguished personages had by this time arrived. In the diplomatic gallery were the ambassadors and ambassadresses, the former in blazing coats, the latter in full dress. In the royal gallery were the queen, the queen dowager, the princess Louisa, the Duchesses of Ostrogothia and Dale-

earlia, and a bevy of titled attendants. Near the throne were the members of the House of Nobles, and seated in the body of the hall were the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants.

In short, the whole place was crammed. No available seat was unoccupied except the throne and two chairs, one on each side of it. All this time a march was being played by a military band, perched up in a sort of private box over the principal entrance, and while these martial strains were filling the air the king's procession entered. First came the same company of pages as I had already observed at church, with their red cloaks and be-feathered hats; then the king's body-guard, in the characteristic uniform of the time of Charles XII.; then some courtiers in ribbons and stars; and, finally, Charles XV. himself, wearing, over his uniform, a crimson velvet mantle, trimmed with ermine fur. On his head was the crown, in his hand the sceptre, and I must acknowledge that, though not a Wasa, he looked "every inch a king." He was accompanied by his two brothers, Prince Oscar, Duke of Ostrogothia, and Prince Augustus, Duke of Dalecarlia, both of whom wore velvet mantles, and, as well as I could see, crowns. On reaching the throne, the king sat down, Prince Oscar occupying the chair to his right, Prince Augustus that to his left, and the people who had assisted in the procession standing in groups about the steps. At this moment the scene before us was really imposing, and the sun lent its friendly aid to add to the effect. The morning had been cloudy, but the interior of the hall was now lit up by long bright slanting rays of welcome-sunshine. As the music ceased, the king proceeded to read, in a distinct voice, a lengthy and, to us, unintelligible speech; I afterwards learnt that this discourse was of the most liberal nature, and quite proved that his majesty was in favour of the proposed reforms in the government. During its delivery my eyes wandered in the

direction of the diplomatic gallery, and there I saw the very old gentleman whose overthrow on board the Copenhagen steamer I have already described. He looked dignified indeed now, in his red coat, his orders, and decorations, but still, the whole steamer scene rushed back on my memory with such irresistible force that I had to pull out my pocket handkerchief to conceal my emotion. As soon as the royal speech was concluded, an address was made by a member of each state in turn; and, this rather tedious operation finished, the trumpeters recommenced their braying, and the nobles, rising one and all, quitted the hall in order, each of them bowing as he passed the throne. The procession reformed, and the king, followed by his brothers, departed as he came; the princesses descended from their gallery, and retired; the diplomatic body did likewise, while the general company made their exit at the principal door.

Prince Oscar had very graciously expressed a wish to see one of my travelling companions and myself during our stay at Stockholm, and he named the morning on which the interview should take place. Being heir to the throne he has a palace all to himself on one side of the Gustaf Adolfs Torg. We were to be there at half-past eleven, and as some one had informed us that his royal highness was particular on the score of punctuality, we were careful to arrive in good time. The ante-room was pretty full of persons who were to precede us into the princely presence, so that some little time had to elapse before we could be admitted. The room itself was long, and warmed by a stove at each end; in the centre was a billiard-table, and around the walls sundry tables, on which lay English and foreign newspapers—the *Illustrated London News* being especially conspicuous. The view from the windows was charming. As we awaited our turn the aide-de-camp of the prince talked to us very fluently in English; he said he had served in the British navy,



and, in the course of conversation, we hit more than once on the name of a mutual acquaintance. At last we were summoned, and led by the aide-de-camp to the prince's room, which is small and plainly furnished. As we came in he walked forward and shook hands with us, speaking at the same time in excellent English, which language he pronounces with the slightest possible foreign accent. He is extremely tall, but does not look robust; on the contrary, he is thin to meagreness, narrow-chested, and a little bent. His face is pleasing and intelligent, and he is said to be by a long way the cleverest of his family, though he does not enjoy the same universal popularity as his brother, the king. We were asked whether we had been pleased with Stockholm and the ceremony at the palace, and then the death of Lord Palmerston, which had happened some time previously, was commented on and deplored. The Fenians next had the honour of being mentioned, and their rebellious machinations were duly condemned. After this the conversation wandered off to the Crimea; and my friend, who is in the army, and had served with his regiment in the trenches, gave a short description of what he had there seen and done. A strong hatred still exists between the Swedes and Russians, and I saw, or thought I saw, a gleam of satisfaction in the prince's eye as the taking of the Malakoff was alluded to. The bone of contention between the two countries is Finland, which originally was Swedish territory, but was wrested from her by Russia early in the reign of Gustavus IV. This foolish king on coming to the throne was so carried away by his detestation of Napoleon that he declared war, not only against that Emperor himself, but against every one who presumed to be his ally; a policy which, it is needless to say, seriously endangered the liberties of his country. Russia took advantage of her neighbour's crippled condi-

tion, seized Finland, and even threatened a visit to Sweden Proper; but this catastrophe was happily averted by the deposition and banishment of the infatuated monarch.

On looking around the apartment where we were standing (for we stood the whole time), I noticed a curious-looking ornament, like a skull, lying on the table. Prince Oscar, I suppose, guessed that I was wondering what it was, for he immediately took it up and presented it for my inspection. "That," said he, "is the mask of Charles XII." I took the relic in my hand and examined it with some interest. It was a mask made to cover the whole face, with apertures for the eyes and mouth and a cavity to admit the nose of the wearer; it was formed of a grey composition, possibly wax, and its expression was such as you might imagine a mirthful ogre's to be. We were next shown a beautiful group in marble, executed by a Swedish sculptor, now dead, and after this we took our leave. Ours was the last audience the prince gave that morning, otherwise the interview would not, I suppose, have been so long.

The Riddarholms Church is not used as a place of worship, but as a royal mausoleum, where the tombs and memorials of deceased kings may be seen. It is built of red brick, and belongs now to no particular style of architecture, so many have been the alterations to which it has been subjected since the original structure was designed. The cast iron spire, which is utterly out of keeping with the rest of the building, is itself much admired. The church is a cold, desolate place inside; utterly empty it seems at first, and as you walk up the nave with sepulchral chapels on either hand, the noise of your footsteps on the stone pavement sounds through the building with a ghostly rattle. Even the guide, who showed us the place, spoke in a whisper, as though afraid of awaking intrusive echoes around the illustrious dead. The first chapel we entered is on

the right of the altar, and here lie the remains of Gustavus Adolphus, the hero of the thirty years' war. Impelled by his zeal for protestantism, and determined to help in opposing the ever-increasing power of the Emperor of Germany, he left his own country in 1630, and in 1632 fell covered with wounds at the battle of Lutzen. Before quitting Sweden, he thus addressed the assembled States: "God is my witness that I do not fight to gratify my own ambition; but the emperor has wronged me, has supported my enemies, persecuted my friends, trampled my religion in the dust, and even stretched forth his revengeful arm against my crown." On his sarcophagus is the appropriate inscription, "*Moriens triumphavit.*" The walls around are covered with the trophies of his victories—standards, drums, and keys of towns, swords of various sizes, and the clothes which he wore when he was killed. Time has reduced most of the banners to shreds and tatters; the very dust which has settled on these precious relics seems to be considered sacred; for keys, drums, and swords, were all covered with it. There was something inexpressibly mournful about the spot—the dim light, the silence that almost caused the ear to ache, the entire solitude. Objects for the possession of which oceans of blood had been spilt lay there rusty, dusty, and neglected, except when some chance sight-seeker, like myself, entered to gaze upon them, and then depart. The tomb of Charles XII. is in the opposite chapel, and I regarded it with far different feelings from those I had experienced in looking at that of Gustavus. There was little enough to venerate in the character of this prince, though his extraordinary career forms one of the most exciting pages in modern history. The trophies of his battles are nearly as numerous as those in the chapel of Gustavus, and there is one great heavy standard which he seized with his own hand when fighting in Poland. The clothes he wore at the time of his death at

Frederickshald used to be preserved here, but for some reason or other they had been removed a short time before my visit. I have been told that they consist of a shabby little cocked hat, with a hole made by the bullet in entering it, a blue coat with brass buttons, and a pair of greasy leather breeches. It is well known that Charles wore his clothes till they were positively in rags, and that, among other unregal eccentricities, he combed his hair with his fingers and spread butter on his bread with his thumb. A magnificent sarcophagus of marble contains the ashes of Charles XIV., founder of the present dynasty, whose memory, as it deserves to be, is affectionately respected by the Swedes. Our guide having shown us all that was to be seen above ground, proceeded to light a lantern and lead the way through a yawning trap-door down a flight of steps, into a sort of crypt. Here the atmosphere was icy, and for any one with a taste for coffins occupation for two hours might have been found: they were here in every variety of shape and size—from the brazen box with its rude ornaments, which holds the bones of queens and kings dead centuries ago, down to the velvet-covered gold-fringed receptacles for the remains of more modern princes. I confess to having experienced a sense of relief on mounting again into the church, which seemed quite lively and cheerful after the dismal vault we had just visited.

One morning we started on foot to see the small country château of Haga, about half an English mile distant from Stockholm. Our way lay by the Drottning-gatan (Queen Street), the most fashionable lounge in the town; but at this time of the day it was comparatively empty. The number of pastry-cooks' shops is a remarkable feature in this street, and indeed all over Stockholm equally remarkable are the numbers of customers who frequent them, and seem to find unlimited tart-eating a wholesome and enjoyable pastime. As



we approached the north gate the pavement ceased, and what had been a street degenerated into a precipitous stony road. We passed on the way a handsome museum recently erected, and farther on an observatory on top of a hill, whence a tolerably extensive view may be had. The town does not melt into the country by degrees; at the north gate it ends abruptly and completely; for beyond this barrier no detached farm or cottage, or superiority in the cultivation of the land, gives evidence of your proximity to the capital. There had been heavy rains the night before, and on issuing from this gate we found ourselves not exactly up to the ankles in mud, but very nearly so; however, we were all lovers of a good walk, and trudged along merrily. The scenery was pretty much as I anticipated it would be—in front a fine forest, ditto to the left, to the right scattered trees, in the distance a dark still lake, behind, a wilderness of red roofs, some high, some low, and here and there church spires, which we had by this time got to know quite well. An iron gate opening on the road admitted us to the park of Haga, and we passed into a well-stocked shrubbery, through which a carriage drive led us beneath some lofty rocks up to the château. It is nothing but a small and rather unornamental villa, built of wood, and painted to imitate stone. It was shut up, and looked uncommonly damp and dreary. Prince Augustus, the king's youngest brother, uses it as a residence in summer, but at other times it remains as we saw it. The grounds are delightful; there are long grass glades, trees single and in clumps, masses of ivy-clad rocks, and the Brunsvicker Lake close by, with its banks dotted over with little red farmsteads. Could anything be prettier in burning July, or even when first the short-lived summer bursts forth to gladden these northern regions? Now there was something desolate in the scene. The noiseless house with its barred

windows, the trees stripped of their foliage, the dead leaves collected in sodden heaps, the lake that mirrored the dull grey sky above,—all these formed a gloomy picture. We saw here a monument in memory of Prince Gustavus, a brother of the reigning king, who died young; it was erected by his fellow-students and admirers of his talents and virtues. He seems to have been the most gifted of an unusually gifted family; and a rock overhanging the lake was pointed out to us, where it was his habit to sit and study, paint, or write poetry. No doubt it was in summer that he thus employed himself; at least if such had been his practice at the latter end of the month of October his early death can hardly be wondered at. On leaving Haga we continued our walk to the Djurgard (deer-park), a magnificent space of gently undulating land. The oak-trees grow here in the greatest plenty; now and then among the towering pines one of these gigantic lords of the forest may be seen standing alone, with a trunk that it would be a matter of time to walk around. Near the town entrance to the park there are numerous country houses, villas, cafés, and places of public amusement much resorted to in the summer, but for eight months in the year altogether deserted.

Ulricsdahl is the name of another royal country house, three miles distant from Stockholm, in the same direction as Haga. It is the favourite summer retreat of the king, who has rebuilt and furnished it according to his own taste. The steep approach through an avenue of lime trees is exceedingly pretty, and a perfect colony of handsome villas, most of them surrounded by well cultivated gardens add not a little to the neat, civilised air of the place. The château, which stands on the borders of a lake, consists of a centre, from which a couple of wings jut out at right angles, forming, altogether, three sides of a square. From the windows at the back you look out

on the lake; the hall door faces a garden, laid out in gravel walks and flower-beds. Beyond the immediate confines of the grounds the scenery appears thoroughly rugged and northern in character, without any of the comparative softness of Haga. On going in, we were all struck with the almost rude simplicity of the interior, but the dining-room, which we began by inspecting, though most peculiar, has no lack of ornament; it is an extremely wide apartment, full of nooks and corners, and divided into distinct halves by a row of carved wooden pillars. A glistening oak wainscoat reaches half-way up the wall, the remainder being hung with embossed leather, richly gilt, which has a very showy effect. Highly wrought pieces of armour, ancient weapons of war, drinking cups, carvings, and grotesque antiquities of all sorts are dispersed about, yet everything in the room is in keeping; not a single piece of furniture was there which did not perfectly match the rest. During the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Sweden, in 1864, they were entertained at dinner in this very room. The rest of the apartments are much like those to be found in any country gentleman's house. The suite which the queen occupies are on the ground floor, and are very wisely arranged more for comfort than show. We saw quantities of beautiful china in our progress, and some choice pictures, one of them painted by the king, who is an artist of no mean merit; his style is bold and forcible, but without finish. There are others of his efforts in this line to be seen in the palace at Stockholm; his full-length portrait of a Dalecarlian girl dressed in the picturesque costume of her province, particularly took my fancy. Another, which pleased me almost as well, was a wild Norwegian scene, simple and suggestive; the fore-ground consists of huge rocks, with short, scant herbage growing above them; behind, a tangle of fir trees, the tallest of them standing out in strong relief from a rainy, vaporous

sky; a mist appears to be collecting above the forest, and penetrating among its dark branches—as you look, you almost fancy you can hear the rain drops, heralds of the coming down-pour, pattering on the ground.

Among other curiosities preserved at Ulricsdahl is a small single-barrelled gun, the stock made of some pale yellow wood, and, attached to it, a faded blue silk strap, by which to sling it over the shoulder. It looked like one of those sham muskets to be found in German toy-shops, and presented by loving parents to amateur sportsmen of six years' old, on their birthday. Yet, powerless as it seems to convey death and destruction, this little relic of the past is a genuine gun, and once belonged to no less illustrious a personage than Queen Christina, the only child and successor of Gustavus Adolphus. This princess displayed at an early age a decided taste for manly pursuits, and the existence of her gun proves how all her childish propensities were indulged. I was told a characteristic anecdote of the king, in connection with this house, which I may as well relate here; the story itself in no way differs from other stupid tales of the kind, except in being, I believe, true. One summer's day, an English family, stopping at Stockholm, set out to pay a visit to Ulricsdahl. Knowing that the château was not shown to strangers during the residence there of the royal family, they contented themselves with perambulating the grounds, which are always open to the public. In the course of their wanderings they came upon a man seated under a tree. *Materfamilias*, thinking him a stranger, like herself, her husband, and her daughters, accosted him affably in the French tongue. Having discussed the weather, and the beauty of the scenery, the lady expressed her regret at not being able to see the interior of the château. "I have permission to show it to visitors," replied the gentleman, "give yourselves the trouble to follow me, and I will



conduct you over it." Of course, the Bull family joyfully acceded to the proposal, and were taken by their obliging conductor into the regal abode, and through all the rooms, where everything that could possibly interest them was shown and explained at great length. On leaving, they all returned profuse thanks to the gentleman for his civility, but he stopped them short by inquiring if there was anything else he might have the pleasure of showing them. "No, thank you," answered mamma, "I think we must be going." Upon this, one of her daughters interposed. "We have been most interested with all you have shown us," she said, "and now I have only one question to ask you—Do you think there is any chance of our seeing the king before leaving, we do so wish to see him." "Then I can easily satisfy you," replied the stranger, bowing low, "for I am he." How the Bulls received this intelligence my informant did not say.

There is yet another place which it would be wrong to leave undescribed—I mean Drottningholm, one of the many lovely islands on the Mälar Lake. We went there by steamer, and the voyage lasted three quarters of an hour. At first, the houses that line the banks give a populous, smiling appearance to the scene, and barges and boats are constantly passing and repassing. But soon these signs of life are left behind; an angle is turned, and the steamer cleaves its course through a maze of islands in perfect solitude, twisting now one way, now another, and ever disclosing new views. The islands varied in size and shape: here was one with its little bay, its brightly painted cottage, its bit of pasturage, and miniature forest, all complete. Within a stone's throw thence would rise abruptly a cluster of rocks, with a fringe of fir-trees on top, the whole reflected with exquisite distinctness on the grey, placid bosom of the lake. The day on which we made this expedition was cold, but still, and breezeless. The steamer glided along rapidly, and we, in

great coats, comforters, and woollen gloves, kept walking up and down the deck, and commiserating a frozen-looking wretch who presided at the helm. Presently, Drottningholm (Queen's Island) appeared in sight, with its magnificent palace, surrounded by superb woods, and approached from the water's edge by a long flight of stone steps. On landing, we found the palace guide awaiting the arrival of visitors to the Versailles of Stockholm, and with him we entered. Now, although palaces generally differ to some extent one from the other, still, the descriptions of them are usually, I have remarked, very similar, and having already attempted to give the reader an idea of Ulricsdahl, I will spare him a detailed account of the splendours of Drottningholm. Its most striking features shall alone be noted. A word of commendation must first be said for the guide, who was himself a walking compendium of useful knowledge. Fortunately, my Swedish cousins were with us, and they literally translated every sentence which fell from this remarkable man's mouth. There was not a single object in the palace with the history of which he was not intimate; no king, or princess, or noble, however obscure, beaming on you from the walls, whose life and genealogy he had not at his fingers' ends. In battle pieces he revelled—the dates of the bloody encounters, the misunderstandings which led to them, the objects gained or lost, the fortresses taken, the generals shot through the head,—all this he recounted with amazing glibness. I don't remember ever feeling so oppressively conscious of my own ignorance. The suites of rooms here are all grand, and there is a great profusion of gilding, marbles, tapestry, and paintings. A picture of Charles XII., as a young man, is said to be the only original likeness of him in existence. Another, equally curious, but painful to contemplate, represents Gustavus III. two days after he had been

shot, and therefore a fortnight previous to his death. It was during this lingering interval of suffering that the portrait was taken, and the sunken, pallid cheek, the restless eye, and compressed lips of the wounded man haunted me for long after I had ceased to look at them. His writing-table, blotted with ink, and the ink-stand used by him are preserved here, as are also some valuable presents made him by Pope Pius VI. The largest and most splendid room at Drottningholm contains full-length portraits of the reigning sovereigns of Europe; those of the late King Oscar, Queen Victoria, and the Emperor of the French occupying the most prominent positions. At the back of the palace there is a broad terrace, and beneath it a formal garden, laid out in long straight alleys decorated with fountains and statues in marble and bronze. The trees are as fine as any I have ever seen.

The Swedes are a very musical people, and great frequenters of

the opera; the season opens in September and lasts till the spring, during which period there are performances every Sunday, and three times in the week. Much more encouragement is given to native talent than in England, and such a thing as a foreign company of singers coming to Stockholm is not known. All the singers—men and women—whom I heard there were above the average, and in one or two cases they proved themselves worthy compatriots of Jenny Lind.

Before concluding, I would say a word of advice to those who may be contemplating a visit to Sweden this year, and that is, go at once; do not wait, as I did, till the brilliant summer has gone by and the damp autumn has commenced. By doing so you will, I am sure, be rewarded;—not only will the country be looking its best, but an exhibition of arts and manufactures, held for the first time, and already I believe, opened, will add this year materially to the natural attractions of the Venice of the North.



## A WOMAN'S MIRACLE.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE WRONG SHALL BE MADE RIGHT.

JEM answered Mr. Burchell's knock and ring, and was much surprised to see that his master had been abroad so early: for excepting that he could not find his boots, he believed his master had yet to leave his bedroom. The groom's green-tinted eyes stared at the flowers.

"Something like a nosegay!—eh, Jem?" said Mr. Burchell, hastily passing through the hall to the breakfast-room.

"Never seed sich afore, sir!" exclaimed Jem, walking on his master's heels. "Flowers is lovely creeturs, and I am werry fond on 'em. They puts me in mind of old times, guv'ner, when you could have gone round yer own grounds, and cut a bunch like that in ten minutes."

"Ah! we have only lost the flowers—the prickles and thorns stick to me like burrs. But never mind that now. I want you to prepare for a long country ride. Indeed, I intend paying an immediate visit to my old friend, Sir William Raymond."

Jem's countenance spoke nothing but pleasure. He touched his overhanging brow with his finger, and then exclaimed—

"Ah! Sir William is one of the right sort, guv'ner, and I'm werry pleased that you are going to wisit him. But I say, guv'ner, you'll excuse me when I say that you must mind your P.'s and Q.'s at Greatlands, for Mrs. Sargood is down there."

"The d——l she is!" exclaimed Mr. Burchell.

"Oh, yes; and Major Bevington, who is werry sweet on her, hangs out there, too, when she is there."

"What!" cried Mr. Burchell. "This is news, Jem! That scoundrel after the widow of a man he killed and robbed!"

"Oh, he's a fust-rate hartist is the major, I do assure you, guv'ner. But mind—oh, but I've had my eyes about me—although he's werry spooney about her, she hates him—hates him, guv'ner! So if you do go to Greatlands, you must keep dark about them ere papers I guv you, for by rights, guv'ner, they belong to Mrs. Sargood."

"The caution you have presumed to give me, Jem, I wish you to take for yourself. These papers I mean to work for your benefit, not for mine."

This Mr. Burchell said to throw his groom off his guard, and Jem made a grateful bow for his master's goodness. "I mean to take you with me, Jem; and mind, never a word to a soul about the papers, or any of my business."

"I'm noblab, guv'ner. You took me when I werry much wanted a service, and I shall be in no hurry to forget that. Although you have no 'osses, and no, what I calls reg'lar groom's work.—"

"That will follow in good time, Jem," interrupted Mr. Burchell. "I intend to be better off than ever, and you shall yet have a fine stud under your control."

"That's the ticket!" exclaimed Jem, excited by the glowing anticipations of his sanguine master. "You had a fine stud once."

"And lost it," rejoined Mr. Burchell, thrusting his fingers through his short thick hair; "but the past should never occupy the brains of a wise man, Jem," he said, clasping him by the shoulder. "I might sit down and weep about the past, and get up all the poorer for it, for I should have lost so much time. No more of the past, then. Prepare we now for Greatlands."

At this moment Amy Burchell came into the room, and so quiet was her entrance made, that had not her father been standing with the flowers in his hand, opposite the door, her presence would not have

been noticed by him or his groom, who at once retired from the breakfast-room.

Quietness, amounting to lifelessness, was the peculiar outward characteristic of Miss Amy Burchell. Nothing was heard that she did. The leaf of a book was turned over, and no one heard the rustle of the leaf; the door would be opened, and no sound would be made; the step crossing the room was an angel's glide, and nothing more. Her speech was but a whisper, and her touch as soft as a snow-flake. She seemed like one that had been dead, but, by some mysterious agency, had been half restored to life again. That she was in the world, and yet not of it. That she was clothed in the mortal habiliments of flesh, and yet all spirit. She had eyes to see, and she seemed to see nothing; she had ears to hear, yet no sound seemed to reach her. Music was the master of her mind, and her mind only knew life under its influence. She walked in somnambulistic step, and spoke in trance or dream.

To her father she was always polite, respectful, and obedient; but since his cruel interference with her heart, she was never affectionate. She dwelt, unforgivingly and hatefully, upon his endeavour to make her the wife of one for whom she had no regard, and to divide her from him with whom heart and soul was blended. But she made no complaint, she was painfully quiet; she was undemonstrative, and her wrongs and griefs seldom intruded themselves on those who knew her.

Mr. Burchell was never very learned in human nature, and as his daughter rarely complained to him, or reflected on his treatment of her at Greatlands, he had no suspicion that she had nursed, for four long years, the bitterest feelings it was possible for a daughter to entertain against a father. He had wantonly killed the better life she had pleaded for, and what remained was now at his pleasure, and his bidding. She had yearned for love—he thought to satisfy her with gold. Her heart had accepted Eustace—he

forced her hand in Robert Raymond's

Mr. Burchell had no faith in love; thought it, if he ever thought about it, as ephemeral as a butterfly's life. Amy married to Robert, she would soon forget Eustace, and cleave to her husband. The estate of Greatlands was substantial and lasting; love was as flimsy as a spider's web, and as ungraspable as a moonbeam. Better money without love, than love without money. They make a capital combination, but if they must be divided, give me the money. So Mr. Burchell theorised, and so he practised with his daughter; who, without, was like an iceberg, but within, the flames rose bright and lurid.

Amy was rather tall, but not slight; she had a pale blue eye, and a very fair face, somewhat elongated; her eyebrows were thicker than is usually seen, but were beautifully arched, and of the same tinge of colour as her hair, which was marked by the rich, delicate yellow of the guinea. This morning she was dressed in flowing muslin dress, and her hair was undressed, and was placed behind her ears, and hung at length down her back. She had just taken a refreshing morning bath, and her face of lovely fairness was just tinted with the most delicate hue of shining red, peculiar to a cold-water dip.

Rarely was Greatlands a subject of conversation between Amy and her father, but no doubt they both secretly hoped the same thing,—that Master Eustace would seek them out in London, and renew his suit; but the days passed by—weary ones to Amy—and no tidings from the object of her love, and hope was being fast strangled by despair. She knew Eustace loved her, and she bitterly felt for him as much as herself. He had been unjustly dealt with, and she had been made the chief party to the injustice.

On coming into the room, she was startled when she heard her father mention the name of Greatlands to his groom, and for a moment paused, while she held the handle of the room door.



After the groom, with his shirt-sleeves tucked up to his elbow, and an apron tied before him, had skulked away, Mr. Burchell approached his daughter, and presented her with the flowers. She received them with a smile, and thanked her father for his kindness, and then smelt their fragrance, and admired their freshness and beauty.

"We can get flowers, you see, dear Amy, although we have no garden," said Mr. Burchell, cheerfully.

"Now they're so new to us, they should be more precious," said Amy, again and again nestling her well-formed nose amongst her father's delightful morning offering.

"Very good, child; so they should," said her father. "As with friends and lovers, so with flowers, Amy. 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder,' eh, child?"

Amy sighed, and took the flowers with her to a seat by the piano.

"Come, come! don't sigh. Let the return of the flowers—unexpected, I am sure, by you—freshen your hopes, as they do mine, that our friends and lovers will also return to us.—You don't look well this morning."

"As well to-day as yesterday, and yesterday as the day before, papa," said Amy.

"But I want to see you better than yesterday or the day before. And—and—but let us have breakfast, Amy, and I will tell you what I intend doing for you."

Mr. Burchell rang the bell, and then told the servant to prepare breakfast immediately; and he and his daughter were soon seated before a substantial and tastefully-prepared repast, to which the flowers, placed by Amy in an elegant vase, gave an unmistakeable charm. Her ample skirt spread out, Amy faced her father at the table; and, with the utmost elegance of deportment, she presided over the tea and coffee; while he, in livelier, heartier fashion, carved the ham and cold fowl.

With the exception of the flowers, not one thing on the table had been paid for, and Mr. Burchell did not

exactly know when they would, and had become too callous to care. He was at this moment in arrears with every one, and every one was besieging him for payment. He was kindly solicitous to keep his daughter in ignorance of his affairs, and seeing that she was not inclined to be inquisitive in the matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, he had little difficulty in accomplishing his wishes.

Mr. Burchell liberally supplied his daughter with pocket-money; but, as she rarely went abroad, and kept no company, she had small use for it, and really seemed utterly regardless of it. If her father excelled in one thing more than another, it was at billiards; at this fashionable game he was considered an excellent player, and he devoted much time to it; and in playing and betting, he managed from this source to supply himself with a fair amount of ready money, but nothing adequate to the whole of his expenses, which, considering the style he and his daughter lived in, were rather formidable.

Twice, as we have seen, the Bankruptcy Court goodnaturedly sponged out the debts of Josiah Burchell, and nothing but Great-lands could save him from again being Gazetted. Some of his tradespeople had good faith in him, withal, and he kept alive this faith, and even borrowed money upon it, by representing to them that he had large expectations from a "screwy," miserly great-uncle, who was now in the seventh stage of man's existence, as classified by Shakespeare, and could not possibly live long.

Mr. Burchell had no such great-uncle, and he had *no* such expectations. He was simply lying, a delinquency he had long ceased to care about. He went in for money, and he had no scruples about the ways and means of achieving his object. The world had mercilessly robbed him, and he would retaliate.—This was the argument with which he met any upbraidings of conscience.

How ignoble!—how utterly lost!

—how pitiable had Mr. Burchell fallen! To make society amenable for his squanderings—to array himself against mankind, because he had the freedom to make a fool of himself—to turn rogue, because he had been silly enough to be duped by fellows that he ought to have known better than to have associated with,—was the height of folly and injustice to which he had risen, and which was fast driving him on a career that he might possibly live to regret.

But there was one thing about Mr. Burchell that no one could fail to perceive and admire. He was always cheerful and hopeful, and this showed that the wicked sentiments of his brain had not touched his heart, for the base-hearted are invariably morose, gloomy, and despairing. But no one can be continually nursing falsehood without it sooner or later pressing the heart into the service of the brain, and then man becomes wretched indeed—dangerous to himself and to society. When once a passion or an evil has enthroned itself in the heart, nothing can unseat it, and for ever after it there holds empire.

“Now, look here, Amy!” said her father, as he passed her a plate of ham and fowl, taking from her hand a cup of coffee; “I intend to take a long drive in the country, and I wish to have you with me. We may stop at home until we lose our health, and there is no mistake about it that your’s is fading, and I am equally sure that mine would be improved by it. Now, I do not mean to huddle ourselves up for hours in the close unwholesome confines of a railway carriage—not a bit of it—that kind of travelling may be expeditious, but it is far from agreeable, and won’t do for me. I mean to get a mail-phaeton with a nice pair of horses, and drive by daily easy stages through the open country, until I arrive at the point I set out for.”

“What point, papa?” inquired Amy, in whispering accents.

“Ah! that is the point, I sup-

pose,” replied her father, smiling. “A little more fowl, Amy? No. Well, then, I’ll take a bit more myself, and perhaps you will kindly give me another cup of coffee, which is particularly good this morning. Really, those flowers are very charming!” All this and other common-place things he said, to give himself time to ponder the best way to answer his daughter’s question.

“Where did you get them, papa?” said Amy, quite careless that she had received no reply regarding the point to which he was going to drive her.

“If I told you, perhaps it would take the charm from them.”

“Not at all. I could not love them more or less, wherever they came from.”

“Oh! Amy,” exclaimed Mr. Burchell, playfully; “I thought you had more sentiment than that. Would not those flowers, culled by the hands of those we love, be more enduring—more charming—than if bought with money out of the cockney’s market in Covent Garden? Ha! ha!”

“Oh! yes, papa,” said Amy, tenderly; “one flower from the heart—the tiniest, the meanest that grows upon the highway—would be more precious to me than a garden from those I cared nothing for.” After saying this, which was an unusually long speech for Amy, she averted her head, and was about to rise from the table, but her father forbade it, and she remained, resting her head upon her right hand, while she leant her elbow on the table.

“Now I have told you my plans——”

“Not quite, papa,” interrupted Amy; “you have not told me where. Not that it is of much consequence—anywhere you wish, papa—for I have now no choice of places.” She said this, little dreaming that her father’s point was Greatlands.

“That’s a good girl! but to find obedience in you is nothing new.”

“But obedience is sometimes made at the cost of suffering,” said the young lady, with a sigh that



was not noticed by her father; but he heard the words, although they were spoken almost whisperingly, and he knew their meaning, but he did not acknowledge it.

"Obedience is a child's duty," said he.

"But woe to those who extort obedience at the price of sacrifice," retorted Amy, with tragic emphasis.

"Stuff, stuff! obedience without sacrifice is nothing worth," said Mr. Burchell.

"Papa, it is not for me to debate your opinions," she said, quietly rising from her chair.

"You are in a dreadful hurry to leave my company," said her father.

"Oh, I will stop if you wish it, papa," she said, coldly resuming her seat.

"Well, as I *do* wish it, perhaps you will do so. I have much to say for your happiness, for which I am always concerned. I have no one, Amy, but you to look to, therefore you should give me some companionship."

"Oh, yes, papa!—I will—I will. What can I do for you?" said Amy, without one accent from the heart.

"Nothing for me, but everything for yourself," said Mr. Burchell.

"But I want nothing, papa. Your care and kindness has given me everything, and you cannot possibly do more."

"There you mistake, my child. I wish yet to do that for you——"

"Oh, no, papa!" cried Amy, "say for yourself.—for you have done all you can for me."

"In what?" inquired Mr. Burchell.

The tears that gathered in each blue eye was Amy's answer to the question, and it was one that her father was unprepared for. Since when she pleaded against his decision that she should marry Robert Raymond—that she should deny Eustace—he had never seen her moved to tears.

What a voice there is in tears! While they give solace and consolation to the wronged and suffer-

ing—how they sting and talk to the heart and mind of the wrongdoer, be he ever so insensible! While Mr. Burchell was taken by surprise at his daughter's show of anguish, he thoroughly understood the source of it. He had the shallowest, worldliest notions of love. He measured all hearts, all affections, by his own, in which nothing sank deep. Although he had married, he had never loved—he was incapable of the tender passion;—and it was quite beyond his understanding that Amy, after four years of separation from Eustace, should yet shed tears about him. Even while he saw her deep disappointment feeding day by day on her "damask cheek," he could not—would not—believe that a daughter of his should be so weak in the head as to fret or care about a man who then had nothing, and was heir to nothing.

Yet those tears!—why have they broken bounds *now*? They could not be for her mother—Amy was but a child when she lost her; they could not be that her father had squandered a fortune and made himself poor—for that, too, was long ago, and Amy too young to understand its bitterness;—they could not be in pity for her father's present difficulties and mode of life—for that she never knew. Then for what—for why—for whom were they shed? He *did* know—but he was anxious to conceal his knowledge from Amy. Yet he was bound to notice her tears and distress, and this he did by saying—

"Why what a mystery you have become, Amy! At your age, you should have done with tears, which in my mind are only associated with pinafores, dolls, and rocking-horses. Come, my girl, cheer up! You lead too dull a life—I'm sure you do—and I am determined that you shall form a larger part of the world you are living in. Music and reading—reading and music—all day long one or the other. Enough to make any one mad. Twenty-one, and with such a peevish face as that. Oh, Amy I am half inclined to be angry with

you. But it is my fault. I have allowed you too long to immure yourself, and made your home a convent of the strictest order. We will change the venue. Prepare for a ride in the park this afternoon, and the opera to-night; and let us have no more tears. I dare say now if I asked you what they were about, you could not tell me."

"I would not," said Amy.

"Whew! whew! A very pretty get out of it, Amy. I am sure you would if you could. But I can tell you their source—they are the offspring of *ennui*, who is the mother of a most detestable family, well known by the name of the "blues," and celebrated for tears, long faces, gloom, and miserable fancies. Ha! ha! and they can only be cured by a strong course of action. Am I not right, Amy?"

"Let it be so—it matters little. I hope it may be the last time that I trespass my tears on your notice."

"Permit me to add, or your own either—for they are dismal companions."

"Not to the wretched—to those tears are mercies," said Amy.

"No doubt, no doubt," Mr. Burchell quickly rejoined; "'Birds of a feather flock together.' But *you* are not wretched, Amy, are you? Come now, that is a plain question, give me a plain answer."

"Think of the events of my life, papa, and answer your own question."

"Well—now, let me consider," he said, musingly. "Yes—you have had your misfortunes, certainly; but they are not of a degree to make you wretched. They have been no more than any young lady of a robust mind should have forgotten. I much deplore that a daughter of mine should not meet all the ills of life with a smiling resignation. I have had troubles, too, Amy—formidable ones, indeed. I have lost a wife, and lost a fortune—a princely one. But I am stout-hearted enough not to be unhappy about them, Amy. I am too much occupied in the search after another fortune for

time to dwell on the one I have lost. And it is all for want of occupation that you are so dreamy, so dismal, and so cold. Jump out of yourself, Amy!" he exclaimed, striking the table with the handle of the knife he held.

"Oh, that I could!" sighed Miss Burchell. "That is the relief I crave."

"Indade! but you are a mighty plisint companion at a jintleman's breakfast table," cried Mr. Burchell, affecting the Irish speech and accent as well as he was acquainted with them.

"Pray let me retire, papa," pleaded Amy.

"Oh, you can do so. Yet no—I do not choose to be baulked in my plans by your frowardness."

"In what have I baulked you, papa?"

"When I say 'baulked,' I mean that your unhappy, inexplicable behaviour very much discourages me. It is quiet, covert rebellion—the worst of all kinds. If I have done you wrong, I must make the wrong right."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Amy.

"I don't know the word," said Mr. Burchell, contemptuously. "What I play for, I try hard to win. I ransack my brain—manœuvre—watch the opportunity—never beaten by time—work in earnest for the thing I want;—and if I fail, then I cry 'impossible!' but the dictionary of my mind has no such word in it when I *begin* the fight. Now to the point, Amy. Five days hence is the fourteenth of April—tell me whose birthday falls upon it? You need not speak—the colour on your cheek answers for you. Well, on that day I intend I and you to be at Greatlands, and guests of Sir William Raymond."

"Not me, papa!—oh, not me!"

"I insist, Amy. I mean to right the wrong I have done you, though what I did, I did for the best. But while Fate defeated me, she prospered you, in removing from the scene the man I intended for your husband."

Amy shrugged her shoulders, and shuddered.



"Come, come; Robert Raymond was not so bad a man as all that."

"I dreamt last night about him."

"How very singular! You see your dream is out. What was it?"

"I dreamt that even while he and you had settled that he should be my husband, he was making love to Judith Shaw, who kept the little school-house by the mill."

"I remember her well," said Mr. Burchell; "a very nice little girl I thought her. Her half-clerical, stiff-necked father, I never thought much of; he was too oily, too toadying, to please me. Judith certainly was a pretty, affable girl; but in all my intercourse with Robert, I never heard him mention her. Besides, Robert was more weak than wicked; and I am sure he was too fond of you—too honourable in his intentions—to deceive me, or you. Let us think as well as we can of the dead, who are not with us to defend themselves. But we are not here to discuss dreams, and I regret that the one you had last night should have so disturbed you."

"It *has* disturbed me; not so much the dream itself—for it little mattered to me who Robert Raymond loved; but it painfully and vividly brought before me scenes that I have been schooling myself so long to forget."

"Not those scenes in the Long Valley with Eustace—you would not forget those?"

"Your tyranny, papa, has now made the remembrance of those scenes the bitterest of all. Oh! how his fine, deep, proud nature was hurt, was stung, with my rejection of his love! It was a cruel and unnecessary wrong."

"Which shall be righted," interrupted Mr. Burchell.

"Never!" said Amy. "Four years of pent-up grief can never be compensated for. Eustace would loathe your very name, much less your presence, and perhaps mine, too. He saw through the paltriness of your proceedings,—saw that he was put on one side, and myself sold for money,—heard of my preference for his brother, and wondered at my falsehood! And yet

you think to win him back? Oh, papa, you do not know him."

"This is unpleasant, unsatisfactory, and unprofitable conversation," said Mr. Burchell; "I have sat long enough and patient enough, to hear the upbraidings of a child, and I'll hear no more. This is Monday—on Thursday morning at this hour, ten o'clock, I will thank you to be prepared in the best possible manner for a visit to Sir William Raymond. Now you can retire, and allow me to finish my breakfast in peace. Mind!—Thursday at ten."

"All things are easy to me now, papa. In that one obedience—"

"Spare me, Amy, from any more of your unjust reflections—your unpleasant lectures. My patience and my temper have been exercised quite enough for one sitting. You are haunted by the spirit of romance, and fancy yourself a martyr to your father. I am not benefited by your becoming Lady Raymond—no, not that crumb of bread—other than that I shall have the satisfaction of having done a father's duty. But be ready; and oblige me further, by making yourself as stylish as you can, and for that purpose, in the course of to-day, I will give you money. And I shall be still more obliged if, on the occasion, you will leave your bitterness behind, and wear your best face with your best clothes."

"Must I go?" pleaded Amy.

"I have determined! Let no more be said." Amy, with the footsteps of a ghost, glided from the apartment.

She had not been gone a moment, before Jem, the groom and general bottle-washer, here tapped at the door, and when his master cried out "Come in," Jem entered with a letter in his hand, his disagreeable face lit up with a knowing grin.

"A private letter from Sir William Raymond!" exclaimed Mr. Burchell, as he took it from his servant, and surveyed the handwriting.

"There's no mistaking Sir William's big B's—is there, guv'ner?"

"I am delighted!" continued

Mr. Burchell, not attending to James Ogden's remark. Then he smiled as he read to himself the variety of postal records scored all over the letter, back and front—"Gone away—left no address;"—"Not known as directed;"—"Try No. 54,"—"Moved to Clarges Street, Piccadilly—don't know the number."—"A well-managed institution of the country is the Post Office, and this letter is an evidence of it. You need not wait, Jem,"—and Jem straddled off out of the room, looking back over his shoulder, not over-pleased that he was not taken into his master's confidence on the subject of Sir William's letter—for those deeds of Mr. Sargood's freeholds had placed Mr. Burchell in a false position with his servant, who very much presumed upon them, and his master thought it his policy slightly to wink at Jem's familiarities.

When he had departed the room, Mr. Burchell coquetted with the letter, wondering what it could be about, and why it should be marked "Private." He owed nothing to Sir William—the only friend of whom he could make such a boast—therefore it could not be for money. Mr. Burchell's pride for himself, and out of regard to the peculiar relations between his daughter and Sir William's sons, prevented his placing himself in the least matter under any obligations to the master of Greatlands.

"It must be about Eustace and Amy," he said, gazing on the letter as he held it on his knee. "Coming events cast their shadows before. Singular! This letter—Amy's dream of Judith Shaw—and my determination to visit Greatlands, all these events to occur this very morning! What does it augur—well or ill for my designs? Let us see."

He broke the great red seal of the letter, impressed with Sir William's arms, and read the following:—

"GREATLANDS,  
April 5, 18—.

"My Dear Burchell,—  
Four years since you and your dear daughter, leaving all here in the dark as to

whither you had gone, or when you would return, vanished from Greatlands. I cannot help charging you with great unkindness in keeping me for so long a time in ignorance of even where a letter would find you. It is only by a very curious circumstance, which I cannot at present reveal, that I was fortunate to discover your address; and it gives me unspeakable pleasure once more to place myself in communication with you. Dear Amy certainly should not so have neglected me. She always knew the great affection I had for her, and should have been so happy to have called her my daughter. Indeed, in my heart she will always bear that title. I long to see her, and lose not a moment to invite both her and you to my estate, the parks and grounds of which are just now wearing their freshest suit of spring robes. I long for a day's hunting with you"——

While he read, Mr. Burchell was somewhat moved with the old man's honest and affectionate manner of addressing him, and could not refrain from exclaiming—"Sir William is a fine-hearted man, a simple-hearted man, a warm-hearted man, and a jolly good friend! A trump! a trump! and I have been an ass to isolate myself from him so long. But I was hoping that Eustace would have turned up ere now. But never mind—if Mahomet won't come to the mountain, the mountain will go to Mahomet. Now then, for the second page of the letter."

"Amy cannot have forgotten, if you have, that on the fourteenth of this month is Eustace's thirtieth birth-day. On that day you know, I always give a feast to rich and poor in token of the event. In this I only follow the example of my ancestors, who always made merry on their heir's natal day. Now mind, Burchell, I expect to see you and Amy here on this occasion, and can take no denial."

"Most singular!" exclaimed Mr. Burchell, "some good man has been praying for me, and Heaven is working all things to my purpose."

"Eustace, I grieve to say," continued the letter, "is in a most unhappy, melancholy, and mysterious state of mind, which daily increases. He has become a hermit;—sees no one, speaks to no one. I cannot understand the sudden change in him, nor the darkness that rests on him. I have often thought that if you and Amy were here, it would put new life into him. You know he loved Amy, and I always thought before she had engaged herself to poor Robert, that she had great regard for him. Do, Burchell, bring Amy down, and if the union between the two would give you as much pleasure as it would me, you would do all in your power to bring them together."

"Could anything be happier than this!" he exclaimed. "Why, I must be dreaming it all, or I have read it wrong—my eyes are only reading and seeing in the letter the reflections and wishes of my own mind." Then he read the last paragraph over again, and continued"—

"Now I have news to communicate, and



which you might have known long ago had you not been so forgetful of me. I have great pleasure to inform you that when poor Robert became engaged to your daughter, he insured his life for five thousand pounds, and that he had attached to the policy a memorandum bequeathing in case of his death, the insurance money to his dearly beloved Amy Burchell"—

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Burchell, going to the window with the letter: "Five thousand pounds to Amy! Why, I shall tear my hair with joy! Oh, it cannot be. I must go back to the beginning, and read through. I surely am mixing up one sentence with another, and making nonsense of it."

Standing at the window, he read right through the letter again, and to his inexpressible joy, he could only gather from it the heartiest of invitations, and that five thousand pounds had been left to Amy, his daughter. The letter closed by saying that the money had been received by his solicitors, and had been paid over to his bankers, and that Amy could have it whenever she pleased.

"What will Amy say to this?" He rang the bell, and the maid-

servant was directed to send his daughter to him at once. She came—coldly, stately, and quietly.

"I have had a letter from Sir William Raymond this morning," said her father, "and if you will take a seat I will read it to you. It contains some glorious news for you, I do assure you." He re-read the letter to his daughter, who only showed signs of feeling at the description of Eustace. At this she shed tears.

"There, Amy, there! Five thousand pounds for you! Five thousand pounds! that shows how much Robert loved you. A fortune for you! Five thousand pounds! Oh, you lucky girl!"

"Not one penny of that money will I ever touch," cried Amy.

"What!" exclaimed her father, frowningly.

"Not one penny!" she reiterated, and left the room in the same manner as she had entered it, leaving her father looking after her in indescribable amazement.

## AN HOUR'S EXTRAVAGANZA.

## CHAPTER I.

MARK WESTON was an unfortunate man. When I say unfortunate, I do not mean that he had suffered any one particular hardship. Mark's trouble throughout life had been life itself. The silver spoon, which, according to ancient tradition some men are born with, was, in his case, of the dullest, commonest, counterfeit Brummagem metal. The snug little farm which his father had left him changed to the Bankruptcy Court, and the Bankruptcy Court to the midnight haunts of a poacher, and these again to the district gaol, from whence he had been cast forth in the comfortable possession of—yes, of his unfortunate self. And now he seemed on the high road to a final change from newly-recovered liberty to her Majesty's penal settlements; for, on the autumn night to which I refer, he was lying behind a hedge, waiting for the light to go out in Squire Harpar's windows, before making an attempt on the plate and other valuables within.

It was a dark night, with sufficient fog to make it dreary and damp, and Mark had been for some time wet, cold, and hungry, with an empty pocket and gloomy mind, and he had got cramped and stiff, and his corduroy suit, which had been fumigated and pressed for three months in the gaol, while its owner's "daily course of duty" ran on the treadmill, was full of creases, and suggestive of his late abode, and probable return thereunto. At last he could bear it no longer, and as all created things of life naturally turn towards the light, he—the most miserable weed of all—turned involuntarily towards the glimmer of a farthing dip in the scullery window of the house.

He had shambled stealthily on for about twenty yards, when the sound of another pair of feet, and the rustle of female garments

brought him to a halt. "Jim!" said a voice, in a half-whisper. "Jim!" Mark held his breath. The voice came still nearer, and with it an odour of blacking. "Jim!" Mark meditated flight, when, with a fourth repetition of the name, a stout country girl sprang into distinctness out of the mist, and he was suddenly enclosed in a warm embrace, and received some dozen kisses in rapid succession. Here was a pretty situation!

"Oh, Jim!" exclaimed the girl, refreshing herself with another salute; "how could you be so cruel? When all's said and done, it was only a joke. I've been out this blessed evening, looking for you near a score of time; and here I've left cleaning the shoes, and everything, and it's as much as my place is worth, and you might ha' come sooner, I know you might! And then to say that you'd never come and see your Nancy again. Oh, Jim!"

Here, indeed, was a situation! To be robbing an absent Jim of his lawful property in the way of kisses as a preliminary to a robbery of forks and spoons was confusing, to say the least of it. Mark's first idea was to disenchant the affectionate maid somewhat roughly, but flesh and blood are weak, and kisses, even when scented with Day and Martin's best have their influence; besides, though it was too dark to discern a feature, the face so close to his own might be a pretty one; and so, I blush to say it, he not only received, but rendered back a full return.

"And oh! Jim," continued the girl, after a minute or so of this amusement; "I was only in joke last night about the beer. You shall have it, if you'll come to the scullery window in half-an-hour. You know master will not be at home till ever so late, and Mr. Jones is here, a sitting up with young missus till her 'pa come. But I can't stop now. It's all your



fault for not coming before. There's Miss Jane, I do believe, a opening of the back door—don't you hear? She's always after me. Well, you'll know better nor to sulk another time, Jim. Aye! there she goes!" A voice calling out "Nancy," was here audible. "Come for the beer, dear, in half-an-hour. It'll be on the sill, and I'll be there, too, if I can.—Gracious! she's at it again." And the young lady vanished as quickly as she had appeared, leaving the flavour of Day and Martin still on Mark's lips.

"What ho, my gallant Romeo! Is the charmer fled, and was it my profane approach that lent her wings? Hold out thy fin, honest Jim! Pompey, thy paw!" It was a man this time, and his hand was on Mark's shoulder.

"Well, my gay Lothario!" went on the new-comer: "how speeds thy wooing? Fortune favours thee, methinks; but as for me, alas!" and he struck his breast dramatically.

"Dash it!" said Mark; "the place is all cracked, and here's another lunatic."

"Why, it's not Jim, after all," said the other, falling back in great amazement.

"No, of course it aint," said Mark, sulkily.

"Oh, faithless woman!" soliloquised the stranger. "Coy and hard to please! Now is Jim most basely wronged. Have you supplanted him, young man?"

"I'm neither Jim, nor nobody else, but a poor unfortunate beggar, as was going to beg some broken meat," said Mark, doggedly.

"Ah! yes, mum's the word," went on the other, putting his finger up. "Discreet and close as wax. But stay—a word will do. What has become of Jim?"

"I'll not stand this any longer," said Mark, in despair. "I tell you I'm not Jim, nor don't know him, nor yond' lass either; and I don't want to—that's more. I'm a poor fellow as has had three months for bagging a hare, and is come out, and doesn't care how soon he goes in again."

The stranger stared. "A poacher,

eh? Would it were light, that I might scan thy face! I want a felon—dark, revengeful eyes—coarse mouth—cropped hair, and beetle brows. The look—ferocious hate! Young man, I like thee."

"You're out for once," said Mark, as the other peered into his face. "I growed all the time I was in."

"Did you, though?" exclaimed the other, evidently in blank amazement. "Witness sublime to prison nourishment!"

"Hair, I mean," growled Mark.

"Ah, yes, I see!" said his companion; "no bristly stubble here. Well, well, we'll be content: you'll make a study yet. Friend rustic, confidence is reciprocal. I am an artist—poet—painter, too—to fame not quite unknown. You have a *dulcinea*; so have I. Yours dwells in yonder palace; so does mine. Yours smiles upon you; mine is somewhat coy. The fact is," continued the stranger, more earnestly, "if you're the real Dromio, I've been deceived—that's all. There is a lad called Jim, who has imposed upon me as your Juliet's Romeo."

"If you've got anything to say," interrupted Mark, "say it, and have done. It's no good speaking fine in that way."

"Well, then, rustic, listen. For the last few days I've been a dodging a girl I know that has a lodging here—your Nancy's mistress. Now, don't interrupt! Your rival, Jim, was my friend. I told him all, and won his gentle heart with pints of ale. He was to get your Nancy on my side, and through her, win me access to my lady-love. Now, since he's false, or Nancy most untrue, I must e'en change my tactics. Rustic, listen!—you shall be Jim's successor, if you will,—inherit all the pints and pipes which else had fallen to his share. In one word, will you help me to beseige the fair Miss Harpar, mistress of this heart? Wages—unlimited credit at the Chequers, rich prospective tips when all is settled, and I happy. Say, is it a bargain?"

"No, it aint," said Mark; "I'll have nothing to do with none on you."

"Rustic, be merciful," said the other, pulling him back; "I really am in earnest. I'm a stranger here, on a sketching-tour. I halted at the village, found the ale was good, and stayed the night. On the morrow Miss Harpar passed, and all was over! I've lingered since about the house, stayed beneath windows, left notes about the grounds, and even thrown one through the bed-room casement. All to no purpose. She has a stern old parent, an immaculate housekeeper, a Spartan butler,—none that I could bribe save Jim, and he's an outsider, and now no good at all."

"Well, I'm no good either," said Mark: "the servant comes a kissing of me, but I never seed her before."

"I'm not asking you, man alive, anything about her. You keep your love-affairs to yourself; as much as you please. You'll meet the girl again."

"No, I shan't!" roared Mark.

"Well, then, you'll not," said the other, changing his tone; "but you don't object to ale and pipes for nothing, do you? If you don't, will you come a hundred yards with me to the Chequers? A friendly glass—now come!"

"Well, I don't mind that, sir," said Mark.

"Come on, then, without more ado. 'Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!'"

"I tell you what," observed Mark suddenly, "there's to be a can of ale a-waiting at the scullery window, in a few moments, for Jim, or anyone who likes to fetch it. Nancy will be there, and, if you like, you can go yourself and make the best of it."

"Hold! Here's an idea!—You are discretion itself, my unknown friend. Not implicate yourself,—not lose the pipes and ale. I see, I see! Rather forego the tender love-scene and drink alone, while I go meet the fickle Nancy. Good!—You go off, and order what you will at the Chequers. Use my name; they know my ways already—Mr. Duval. Now, don't forget. Just at

the corner down the road, and wait there till I come. Spare not the ale. I'll go and meet thy Nancy, drink the swipes, and win her over. Don't forget the name—Duval!"

As Mr. Duval disappeared in the direction of the house, Mark turned away towards the ale-house, and a thought struck him that possibly Mr. Harpar's spoons and forks might rest quietly in their plate-basket for this night, at all events.

## CHAPTER II.

Miss Jane, the housekeeper and cook, and Mr. Cramp, the footman and butler of Mr. Harpar's establishment, sat in the kitchen, on each side of the fire. Once on a time, it had been "Jane" and "Thomas;" but years had gone by, and they had fairly earned promotion. Miss Jane, with her dress turned carefully back over her knees, sat with her feet in a pair of carpet slippers on the fender, and drank hot port-negus. Mr. Cramp had the other end of the fender and added unto his negus a long churchwarden. Four-and-twenty years had they thus occupied the fender together, night after night, like the tutelary Lares of the house; and every night did Mr. Cramp smoke a privileged pipe, and he and Miss Jane together imbibe the privileged negus.

Mr. Cramp was a man of few words: Miss Jane was a woman of many. This evening, she had got an idea—an old one, revived with great force. Single blessedness was an evil. Why shouldn't Mr. Cramp marry her? Why hadn't he done so long since? Why shouldn't she give him a gentle hint on the subject?—So she began.

"It's an awful cold night, Mr. Cramp."

"Hum," said Mr. Cramp, assentingly.

"And mortal lonesome, like—now ain't it?"

Mr. Cramp looked at his pipe, and glass, and the fire, and did not assent this time.

"I often wonder what them poor



creatures must do, as don't have no one to look after them," sighed Miss Jane. "I'm afeard there's a good deal o' misery in the world, Mr. Cramp, a mighty deal more than we knows of," with a sip at the negus.

Mr. Cramp having nothing to say to this proposition, she resumed:—

"That's what I often says to myself, when I see them two young folks up-stairs, bless their hearts! a sitting side by side, as I'll be bound they're doing at this very identical moment, a holding of one another's hands, and a planning the marriage-day, and the white favours. I often says, its a mercy, says I, there'll be no misery in that quarter."

Mr. Cramp rubbed his nose with a meditative expression.

"Yes, and there ain't such a *very* bad-looking couple below in the kitchen, is there, Mr. Cramp?" simpered the lady, with a meaning smile towards the other end of the fender. "It's quite co-incidental, a couple below and a couple above, and two nice couples, too, Mr. Cramp, eh? Why any one coming in now would think *we* were keeping company, wouldn't they?"

"People's thoughts are none-sense, ma'am," observed Mr. Cramp, sternly.

"Now I'm a pedestrian," continued Miss Jane, nowise daunted by the failure of shot number one, and slightly mistaking her terms, "I'm a pedestrian, and believe what is to be will be. I might appear to some people quite unlike a marrying woman, mightn't I, Mr. Cramp? and yet I shouldn't be surprised if I was to take to the 'nubial state before long. My poor mother used to say I was born to house-keeping, and you see its come true; and such talons are not to be thrown away on other folks all one's life. A nice snug house of one's own, and a bit of garden land, and may be a pig or two—I daresay I may think of all this one of these days. It's a selfish thing to keep a saving up of money for one's self, and between you and me, I've put by a goodish bit, Mr. Cramp.

And what is a going to be will be, whatever one may do." Here she finished her negus, and again looked hard across the fender.

"And so," she continued, after waiting in vain for Mr. Cramp to say something, and firing her shots rapidly and with precision—"and so, Mr. Cramp, if I could meet with a nice, respectable, middle-aged (glancing hard between each word), steady, nice-spoken (here the glance was prolonged), good-looking man, who wanted a managing wife, why I don't know but I might undertake the responsibilities of matrimony. What do you say to that, Mr. Cramp?"

"I say," replied Mr. Cramp, "with your permission, ma'am, as we've finished our glasses, we'd better try what two more would be like of the same sort." And he went to fetch the bottle.

It was necessary to fire a very big shot indeed. Miss Jane felt this, and rallied all her forces for a last attack. She sipped a little of the hot negus, and waited a few moments. Then she spoke.

"Mr. Cramp."

"Ma'am."

"What should you say if I told you a secret?"

"Can't say, ma'am."

"A very important secret. One I shouldn't tell everybody; to hardly any one but you, Mr. Cramp; indeed, it ain't quite proper to tell it at all."

"Better think twice about it, ma'am."

"Well, Mr. Cramp," speaking very slowly and impressively, "There's a young man coming after me now."

Mr. Cramp looked earnestly at the door, as if expecting to see the young man appear.

"It's quite dreadful to think on, Mr. Cramp. I'm a prudent woman, and it is shocking to have a young man watching for one, outside, whenever one puts one's face at the winder, and bowing like a real born gentleman."

Mr. Cramp looked attentive, so Miss Jane proceeded with the picture.

"A nice, handsome young fellow, with black hair and white hands and mustackios; and a white cut-away coat with large buttons; and a stick with a gold top to it."

Mr. Cramp listened still more attentively, and hope rose in Miss Jane's gentle bosom. If she could but make him jealous!

"He puts his hand in this way to his side, Mr. Cramp, and bows—oh, so genteel!—and I've seen him near every day for a week past, and he's a great painter from London; now think of that!"

"Well, ma'am," said the butler, seeing she stopped, "there's not much in it."

"No, Mr. Cramp, there's not much in *that*," resumed the housekeeper, getting excited as she went on; "but there's much in messages, perhaps, Mr. Cramp; and in notes, Mr. Cramp; in letters thrown in at the winder; in billy-dews like this, Mr. Cramp!" triumphantly displaying a triangular pink note from her pocket.

"Well, ma'am, it's got some writing inside?"

"Yes, and you'd like to read it, Mr. Cramp, and to know all about it, Mr. Cramp,—wouldn't you, now?"

"Well, ma'am, I've no objection," said the butler, phlegmatically.

"No, Mr. Cramp," said the lady, with a show of virtuous indignation, "then you don't. I've said too much already, and another's secrecies is plicated here; but, if any one is looking out for me,—and you don't meet with a housekeeper of my experience every day, Mr. Cramp,—he'd better be quick about it, or may be there'll be a prior engagement, that's all.—And we'll change the subject, if you please."

Mr. Cramp quietly finished his glass, gave a few last whiffs at his pipe, knocked the ashes out, glanced at the clock, rose with great deliberation, put back his chair, walked to the door, and then stopped. Miss Jane had subsided into sullen silence.

"You've had your say," said the butler, "now I'll have mine. I

doesn't say much, but I thinks a good deal. You says a good deal, but doesn't think at all. And what I have to say is,—it's spoons, ma'am."

"Spoons!" cried Miss Jane, starting.

"Yes, ma'am, it's spoons—spoons and forks, and silver, ma'am, and anything else that can be laid hold of. It's robbers and breakings into houses, that's what it is, and I'm not a going to stand it." And Mr. Cramp walked up-stairs.

"Thank goodness, he's jealous at last!" exclaimed Miss Jane. "Thieves indeed, a very pretty idea!"

The couple above to whom the housekeeper had referred were not so private in their billing and cooing as to be at all disturbed when Mr. Cramp knocked and entered. I doubt if they even altered their relative positions on the sofa. For Mr. Jones was an accepted lover; the regular orthodox course had been pursued, the proper probation time fixed, and matter-of-course visits were paid every week, involving each of them a *tête-a-tête*, like the one which was now interrupted. Mr. Jones was second-master at the grammar school in Chickenborough, about two miles off. A steady substantial young man, a young man of fixed principles, who had passed through Cambridge with credit; a young man of whom were prophesied great things,—to be ordained shortly, with rectories, and who could tell what, in prospect, in fact,—a most desirable catch altogether.

Now, at this moment, Mr. Jones's sense of decorum had obtruded itself very awkwardly. It was getting late, and Mr. Harpar had not yet returned from the annual magisterial dinner, and if the county business, or the county wine should detain him all night, he (Jones), by staying where he was, would place himself in sole charge of Miss Harpar until morning. This would be awkward and embarrassing. On the other hand, it was a cold, dreary walk to Chickenborough, and he was not partial to the road after



dark, and his landlady would be gone to bed, and the fire out. Being, therefore, in much doubt, he took Mr. Cramp's entrance as a hint to decide one way or the other, believing the butler was come to signify it was time to close up the house for the night.

Miss Harpar, on the other hand, who had personally superintended the investiture of the spare bed with clean sheets, had settled that Mr. Jones should remain, as a matter of course. Knowing, also, of sundry cunningly-devised dishes left under the charge of Miss Jane, and shortly to be produced for supper, she, consequently, hailed Mr. Cramp's entrance as an announcement of the same being ready.

It was, therefore, to the astonishment of both that the butler begged pardon, but might he speak to the young gentleman alone for a minute or two, as he had something "particklar" to tell him.

Mr. Jones, rejoiced to find the evil day put off a little, smiled and assented. Miss Harpar remarked that it was a mysterious request, but assented likewise.

The butler led the way to the dining-room, and then with great solemnity informed the astounded lover that he (Cramp) suspected robbers were about the house. He declined to say how he got his information, but it was a fact. They might be about at that moment. The master's being away was favourable to 'em. He wasn't a going to stand it. So far from that, he were a going to begin a strict watch there and then. Finally, he had summoned Mr. Jones to obtain that gentleman's assistance in an immediate inspection of the premises.

Mr. Jones was not constitutionally brave, and the character and suddenness of the news were startling; but Miss Harpar's safety was involved, and beside, the chances were that if robbers were about, he might meet them on his way back. On the whole, the house was safer, and he had now a good excuse for staying. So, in some

trepidation, he agreed to Mr. Cramp's request.

Meantime, the housekeeper was busy in the kitchen, preparing the supper. Beyond the kitchen was the scullery, mentioned before, and in this scullery were all the boots and knives cleaned. It was Nancy's purgatory, for to that young woman these duties fell, and great were her grumblings thereat. "It wor a man's place, and Muster Cramp ought to do it, so he ought!" Associating the scullery with the work performed in it, she held this region in the greatest abhorrence, and seldom or never entered it, save when compelled. But this evening, to Miss Jane's wonder, Nancy lingered about her work there in a most dilatory manner, found a hundred pretexts for quitting and then returning to the knife-board, "loitering and dilly-dallying," as the housekeeper declared, till the latter lost all patience and ordered her away. The command was obeyed, but with so much reluctance, that Miss Jane's suspicions were excited. Nancy's flirtation was not quite a secret; Miss Jane had vaguely heard of Jim, and, having a similar affair, as she believed, on her own hands, was naturally most indignant at anybody else presuming to follow her example. "I'll be bound that trapesing vagabond's a-coming to the scullery," she mused; "I'll Jim him!" After which threat she contrived half-an-hour's occupation for Nancy in another part of the house, and stole quietly to the scullery, herself, to see into the matter.

A moment after, the meddlesome hand of Fate led Messrs. Cramp and Jones, in the course of their tour of inspection, towards the same quarter. Finding the kitchen empty, Mr. Cramp was just about to impart to his companion some fresh ideas, when, all at once, an exclamation in the housekeeper's voice came through the partly open door beyond, followed by a sound of somebody—certainly not Nancy—expostulating in a very low tone. "Now for it, sir," whispered the butler; "I think we've got 'em!"

And they both crept on tiptoe to the door, and listened for a moment.

On the housekeeper's entering the scullery, the first thing that had presented itself to her view was a stone pitcher elevated to nearly a horizontal position by the agency of some invisible power on the other side of the open window. Before she could utter a word the phenomenon was explained. The jug descended, and a sigh of relief was audible from the darkness. It was clearly Jim.

"Why, you owdacious, imperent, good-for-nothing——" commenced Miss Jane. "Hush, hush!" said a beseeching voice: "'tis the fair Nancy come at last. Oh! gentle goddess, list!" And the head to which the voice belonged was intruded through the window; a head with black hair and moustachios, with a vision of white coat on the shoulders beneath; the head of no Jim, but of the handsome young man about whom she had been trying to make Mr. Cramp jealous.

"Gracious goodness me!" said Miss Jane. This was the ejaculation which caught the ears of the two men in the kitchen.

"Charming maiden," said Mr. Duval, for it was he; "be not afraid. *He's sent me—he, you know (confound it, I forgot to ask the fellow's name,*" said Mr. Duval, *sotto voce*) your gentle swain. I only ask one moment's leave. Come near, and let me whisper."

"Oh dear!" gasped Miss Jane, "and has it come to this?—Oh dear me! Oh, sir, you must go away this minute! You shouldn't have done it! I shall be disgraced for ever! Go away, sir, this blessed minute!"

"No, he don't, though!" roared Mr. Cramp, rushing in; "now we've got 'em! Oh, you baggage! Open the door, sir, and out on him!—I knowed there was something up."

Miss Jane fell back speechless. Mr. Duval, with ready presence of mind, snatched up the beer-jug, threw the remaining contents at the butler's head, then the jug itself, and took to his heels, all in one and

the same instant. Alas for an ill-directed aim! The beery shower missed its object, and came full on the face of the innocent Jones, completely drenching him, and dispersing his little remnant of courage. He darted back half-blinded. Mr. Cramp was already out of the back-door, when Miss Jane seized him by the coat-tails. "Help, help, Mr. Jones!" she screamed; "he'll do himself a mischief. Catch hold of him!—keep him back!—he's mad! He thinks I'm false. I never asked the fellow;—I don't know him—I don't want to. Oh, Cramp, Cramp, don't be violent! I'll never tease you again. Help!"

"Will nobody strangle this Jezebel?" roared the butler. "She's cracked! Take her away, will you, some one!"

With a mighty wrench he got free, and immediately rushed off after the fugitive. Miss Jane went into hysterics, and screamed till the house rang again.

And now a new element of discord was added, Nancy, who had a vague notion of something wrong, no sooner heard the uproar, than she sprang towards the scene of action, and met Miss Harpar, similarly alarmed to herself, half-way.

"What's the matter, Nancy? Oh, what's the matter?"

"Matter, madam," blubbered Nancy; "they're a murderin' of him. Oh, my precious Jim!" And she rushed downstairs.

Miss Harpar only waited to catch the word, murder. The housekeeper's screams were ringing in her ears; and instantly conceiving that a wholesale slaughter was going on below, she darted into her bed-room, closed and locked the door, and fainted away.

### CHAPTER III.

MARK went on his way to the ale-house, in anticipation of pipes and beer. Sure enough, he soon found the Chequers, and a blazing fire, and merry company; all of them on a like errand. A civil landlord, too, and pretty barmaid, and casks of spirits, and barrels of ale. So



far, so good; but when he gave his order, and stated, as a precautionary measure, his authority for the same—viz. Mr. Duval—the smiling face of the tapster changed most unaccountably; his fingers, which had hold of the beer-pump handle, loosened their grasp, and he curtly informed the astonished Mark that if this was the only money he had to show, he might as well try the shop “t’other side of the way,” whereat the company laughed assentingly.

“Why, he told me you knowed him,” said Mark, reddening.

“Know him! aye; for a cool, impudent rascal, as drinks and guzzles hisself, and makes others drink, too, and never pays so much as a farthing. I’m not a going to empty my stuff down his throat, or your’s either; and all for nothing. And, so, Mister, you’d better be off and tell him so.”

There is nothing so annoying as to be disgraced in the eyes of one’s equals. Here was a whole tap-room laughing at him, and he without a penny to order a glass with for himself. It was too bad. Mark grew angry, and proceeded to vent his wrath on the landlord. The latter retorted by ordering him off the premises, at the same time offering to punch his (Mark’s) head, for, and in consideration of, the trifling sum of two-pence.

Hereupon, Mark defied the whole company, individually and collectively, to mortal combat, expressing his ability to “lick the whole lot,” and turned away in considerable disgust.

“I say, Mister,” shouted the landlord, from the steps, “if you want a fight, just go and punch your friend’s head, will you? He deserves it bad enough. You’re sure to find him at Squire Harpar’s.”

Mark was in the humour to comply. He was mortally savage with Mr. Duval, for sending him such a wild-goose chase. Besides, there was the can of ale at the scullery-window. He would go back, at all events. At this instant, a new actor appeared on the scene.

Mr. Harpar was passing by the

Chequers, on his return from the magisterial dinner. To say he was an intemperate man, would be false; but certainly, on this occasion he was far from sober, having reached that state of muzziness which may be called the over-wise. The company had consisted principally of his brother magistrates, and over their wine, they had been discussing the number and increasing percentage of criminals and crimes. Each had proposed some elaborate and infallible remedy, and all had got so wonderfully sagacious, that, by the time they separated, the knotty points of judicature had been finally and satisfactorily arranged,—though, alas! only in talk. At the present moment, Mr. Harpar felt himself more than ordinarily knowing, and was reflecting, what a pity it was that he had only to retire to bed, like any other mortal, instead of exercising his superlative stock of wisdom for the benefit of the public. Hearing, therefore, his own name bawled out from the village ale-house, coupled with an intimation that somebody was about his premises, he at once decided that interference was necessary, and accordingly kept as close behind Mark Weston as the wine and darkness combined would permit him.

Thus, when our hero once more neared the scene of action, he was for a third time accosted, and now it was by a fussy little man, evidently half-seas over, with a pompous manner, and a husky voice, who demanded why he was there, and what the—something—he meant by it. “I am a magistrate, sir,—appointed by Her Gracious Majesty, sir, to look after the district. I am Mr. Harpar, sir,—George Harpar, Esquire, Justice of the Peace. I convict you of unlawfully entering my private grounds: consider yourself sentenced to—to—what the deuce is it? Never mind, I’m not going to have vagabonds about my house at this time of night.”

“You’ve got one too many, already,” said Mark, “I’m not after none of your house.”

"No trifling. Prisoner at the bar, I commit you for contempt of court," said Mr. Harpar, making a lurch towards Mark to lay hold of his coat.

"Here, old gentleman, none of that! If you want a game of that sort, first go and catch t'other cove." A bright idea of bringing Mr. Duval to open shame had struck Mark forcibly. "There's a fellow a dodging about the back door now."

"Eh, what's that? Any more of you?"

"I tell you, there's a cheating scamp at the scullery now," said Mark, earnestly.

"And you're after him? Excellent young man. And I had brought you in guilty!" exclaimed Mr. Harpar, suddenly changing his tone. "Admirable creature! I repeal my decision. I see how it is. You're a special detective. Eh! Men about my house; good gracious! A gang of burglars, eh?"

"I only know of one," said Mark "and he's a lunatic."

"Good gracious! worse and worse! Lunatic and burglars! Not an instant must be lost! Constable, you shall be handsomely rewarded. Use your staff: knock every one down. I authorise you—George Harpar, Esquire, Justice of the Peace."

"I'll use th' stick, sure enough," growled Mark, thinking of the Chequers, and then of Mr. Duval.

It was at this instant that the first of Miss Jane's screams rang through the air. "I'm blest if they aint at it!" said Mark. "Here's a game!"

Mr. Harpar rushed on in great excitement, repeating his orders for every one to be knocked down without mercy.—"Here's some one coming; hold hard, sir!" cried Mark, but it was too late. The "some one" was running in hot haste, and in another second came into collision with the worthy justice, prostrating him with no gentle force on a prickly rose-bed. "It is the painter, by the powers," thought Mark, as the assailant staggered back, and he instantly

sent him after Mr. Harpar by a well-directed blow of his cudgel. "That's for the beer, old fellow! Hold on, sir, I've done for him. Give us your hand."

"Thieves! murder! battery and assault!" roared the Squire. Constable, I'm waylaid. I am in danger of my life! I call you to witness that I've been half murdered. Where are the villains?"

"Here's one of them a quieted," said Mark.

"One of them; there were a dozen! a dozen at least! You're a brave fellow! They would have done for me. Here, give me your arm; help me in. Good gracious, there are more of them in the house! They're murdering my daughter! Come on! A thousand furies, the fellows have lamed me for life!"

"They're making noise enough," said Mark, helping him along; "but I think there's only one man about, sir, and I've settled him for five minutes, anyhow."

"One! there are fifty—a hundred!" roared the Squire. "You knocked down a dozen of them. I saw you do it. Give it to the villains again."

The "villains" apparently consisted of Miss Jane in screams and hysterics in the kitchen, Nancy sobbing in the scullery, and Mr. Jones with the kitchen-poker, nervously doing nothing. Miss Harpar, after her faint was over, remained in her room, silent from sheer fright. The three others made a rush towards the squire, as he entered, covered with mud and prickles, with Mark Weston behind him.

"Oh, sir, where's Cramp?"

"Jim, sir! oh, have they hurt him?"

"Where's the man, sir? Oh, thank Heaven you're here."

"Where are the robbers?" shouted Mr. Harpar, silencing them all. "Where's my daughter? Is anybody hurt? No! Then what's all the noise about? Look at me—waylaid—assaulted in my own garden. A dozen of them dispersed by this brave fellow. Where's Cramp? Where's my daughter?"



"Cramp, sir?" sobbed Miss Jane; "he's after the man. Oh dear, dear! he'll be hurt; I know he will!"

"The man! Why, woman, there are twenty of them. Where's Miss Harpar? Dash it, everybody's mad!" said the squire, as Miss Jane and Nancy went off into a fresh set of hysterics. "Here, Jones, and you, my brave fellow, come up-stairs; we must rouse the neighbourhood."

There was no need to do this. Miss Jane's screams had been heard at the neighbouring cottages. The news spread rapidly that Squire Harpar's house was attacked, and aid came pouring in from every side. Among the first arrivals was Mr. Cramp, led in by two men, with his head broken. This added to the mystery. The news reached the Chequers, and, just as Miss Harpar's door was opened, and that young lady received into the muddy arms of her father, came the landlord, with Mr. Duval—of all persons in the world—in close custody, but perfectly whole and sound.

It was an impressive scene. Mr. Cramp was lying on the hearth, getting his head dressed by Miss Jane. The squire, more than half-sobered by his fall, stood opposite, attended by Mark. Mr. Duval was indignantly struggling with his captors. Nancy was faintly sobbing, and Miss Harpar was supported by Mr. Jones. An inquisitive throng of villagers filled up the back-ground. Everyone talked at once, and the effect was edifying.

"Here's the man, sir!" said the landlord, lugging forward Mr. Duval; "he's been knocking about your house ever so long, to my sartain knowledge, and he's a thorough vagabond. And there, I think, is a partner of his," pointing to Mark. "I've seen him, too."

"That is him as come to the house," said Mr. Cramp, feebly, pointing to the artist.

"Nonsense!" said the squire, "I tell you there were a dozen of them. This may be one, certainly; but as to my brave fellow—pooh, pooh! Young man, I shall never forget this night."

"And, if you please, sir," said Miss Jane, "I don't think the other young man meant any harm. Truth is truth, Cramp, and I can't let an innocent fellow-creetur suffer for my sake. I'm sure I'm sorry it should have turned out so," turning to the astonished artist, "but this awful night has taught me my heart's another's; so I'm sure you'll go away, and not knock anyone else down."

"What's she raving about?" asked Mr. Duval, wildly. "Why, I've never seen the woman before."

"You untruthful man," said Mr. Jones; "we found you talking to her in the scullery."

"Just hear me for a moment, all of you," exclaimed Mr. Duval. "I came here this evening on private business. Then did I see that maiden," pointing to Nancy, "in this rustic's arms."

"In *his* arms," screamed Nancy. "Oh, you story-telling villain! I never seed him afore. I just spoke to Jim, a nice young man, sir, as is a following of me—with your leave—I did just speak to Jim."

"That you didn't," interrupted the landlord; "Jim's been in my room all the evening, till just a while ago, when I sent him home drunk—so, there now!"

"I don't care," said Nancy, "it was him, and he came to the scullery to see me, and they fell upon him, sir; and if he did give Muster Cramp a broken head, I'm sure he never meant to do it."

"It warn't Jim," said Mr. Cramp. "It war ———"

"It was one of the same gang who assaulted me," broke in the squire. "You're all drunk, or mad. The affair's plain enough. There have been men about the house, and this fellow with the moustache is one of them, and we've caught him. What's your name?"

"Henry Duval, sir, very much at your service."

"Duval," said the squire; "not one of the Duvals of ———?"

"Of S——? Yes, sir," said Mr. Duval, condescending to speak in prose, "these people have laid hold of me, but I swear I have done nothing."

"Good gracious!—why—I know your father, then! Why, here's a pretty mistake! You can't be one of these miscreants?"

"I hope not, sir," said Mr. Duval; "I'm an artist."

"Exactly, exactly! I remember now. All my people are gone mad, with their Nancys, and Jims, and scullery windows. Let's hear no more about it. The police shall catch the rascals. I'm stiff and tired. They've knocked down Cramp, and got bowled over in return, some half-dozen of them, by this fine fellow. What's your name? Weston, eh? and these women have been frightened to death, and they've laid hold of you, Mr. Duval, for want of someone more likely. There,—disperse, all of you at the door, and get Miss Jane to give you something to drink. Now let's have supper, and be thankful it's no worse."

It is the close of the last act. The plot is over; and nothing left but the final grouping at the foot-lights, and parting speeches. Paterfamilias is gone to look after the carriage, and mamma is muffling the necks of young ones, with her back to the stage; and no one is listening. And so, we hurry to an end.

Mark Weston slept that night at Mr. Harpar's. It was a lucky evening for him. Nothing could persuade the squire but that Mark's hand had been the means of his safety. The county papers rang with, "Unparalleled outrage at the

residence of a Chickenborough Magistrate. Gallant conduct of a countryman." Mark was quite a lion. Mr. Harpar wanted a man for his garden, and stable; Mark was installed. He proved active and honest; and, as he always held his tongue about the one eventful night of his life, he ever retained his credit, save with Miss Jane and Mr. Cramp, who had their suspicions to the last. The affair itself ever remained a mystery, for the squire positively forbade the different and confused versions to be repeated. Gradually it became a thing of the past; every one concerned having an interest in keeping his own part a secret.

Mr. Duval is a rising artist, and flighty as ever. Mr. and Mrs. Jones are well known, and highly respected in their parish. Miss Jane and Mr. Cramp still drink their negus at the old kitchen fender. But the most favoured and petted dependent of the squire's is Mark Weston, as happy, contented a fellow as any on earth. Nancy is Mrs. Weston. She threw Jim overboard from the date of Mark's arrival; and there are a whole tribe of little Westons to fill the cottage Squire Harpar has built for them. And if any of my readers will call at the same, they will meet with a hearty welcome, and possibly hear over again the true version of the village mystery,—“How Mark Weston made his fortune.”

SEMPER VIGILANS, B.A.



## PER ASPERA AD ASTRA:

A TALE OF LOVE, WAR, AND ADVENTURE.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE MORNING.

WHEN our hero awoke (for on this occasion we cannot praise him for being an early riser), the sun was shining brightly on the casement, and spread its rays into the apartment. It was a noble and spacious chamber, the ceiling of which was ornamented by a magnificent cornice, representing the labours of Hercules. The walls were pannelled with dark oak, but that noble wood did not so abound in this room as in the one before spoken of. Of the marks by which a nobleman's chamber is usually distinguished, few could be noticed except the admirable order with which everything was arranged.

One thing alone was sufficient to give evidence of the former splendour of the court of Staelburg, namely, the beautifully carved chimney-piece. It was an elaborate work of art, representing the meeting of the Grecian chiefs on the Trojan plain, sculptured out of brilliant and spotless marble, and, placed in a clear and good light, the effect was most imposing. Opposite the window was a picture of the fall of Phaeton from his chariot, executed by Titian in that harmonious style of colouring so peculiar to himself. A spirited representation of the death of Achilles hung on the right side of the door. On another side was a very exact resemblance of Staelburg castle, taken by a wandering artist, in return for the hospitality he experienced from one of the ancestors of its present possessor. As we do not profess to be well versed in antiquarian lore, we will not presume to state whether the structure looked better in its ancient or modern state.

On a book-shelf were eight or nine

massive volumes, one of which was the family Bible, which, in defiance of pope and priest, had been attentively perused both by Staelburg and his ancestors; others contained the origin and rules of certain sports, which, if not quite in accordance with the opinions of Strutt, at least were very satisfactory to the reader. Among them also were books of poetry and light reading, Horace and Tasso, both of whom were favourite authors with the young Count. There was also in the apartment an object which, from being regarded with great interest to its owner, should not be overlooked. It was a large walnut-wood chest, clasped with bars of iron, and secured by a padlock of an orthodox size. It contained the archives of the family, as well as the muniments to the title of such of the young noble's estates as remained in his hands. Certain other documents, probably "only of use to the owner," were deposited therein. And the whole chest was guarded with such an eye as one of those fabulous animals of old, 'yelept griffins, might be supposed to cast over the spot where his gold was secreted. But as Staelburg's family (unlike that of our Celtic neighbours) could lay claim to no more remote antiquity than Adam, and, moreover, as many of his ancestors were of rather less degree than princes—such a chest as we have described was quite adequate for the purpose for which it was designed.

He knew the human heart well who said, "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" and it is a fond and elegant conceit, that ministers of good take advantage of man's help-

less state to bring virtuous and cheering thoughts to his mind. Staelburg arose in a more hopeful mood than that in which the previous night left him.

By the assistance of his valet, Fritz, he was soon attired in a hunting-suit of green, with boots and other articles of costume in accordance.

"A fine day for your sport, my lord!" said Fritz, presuming to hazard something on the strength of the cheerful countenance of his master.

"Yes, Fritz; the prospect is cheering; and I think that, if the wind be not too high, we may have good sport."

"Master Straussheim told me yesterday of a place where some fine stags consorted."

"Where is it, Fritz?" asked the young Count, with eagerness; for he was a keen lover of that species of venery which seeks more after the amusement to be derived from the chase than the good venison obtainable by the death.

"Do you know the place which the woodcutters call the 'Thicket?'"

"I know it well; many a good animal have I roused from his covert there; it is exactly the spot where I should expect a good hart to lurk."

"To the right of that is a smaller coppice," continued Fritz; "and there, Straussheim says, he tracked the slot of as fine a deer as the emperor could desire."

"Well, well; I will follow your advice," said the young man. "But as I must have some attendant, and there is no one who knows the woods as well as yourself, do you therefore equip yourself in a fitting costume to follow me."

The man bowed as he received this flattering eulogium, and withdrew to prepare his own toilet for the sport. Meanwhile the count of Staelburg descended the stairs into the oak chamber, where the good housewife Kaisa had prepared breakfast. Whilst he is thus pleasantly engaged, doing justice to the good cheer, we will make a closer investigation into the interior of the mansion, unless our readers would

be particularly edified by a full, true, and particular account of the quantity of Westphalia ham and Rhenish wine which went the way of all ham and wine, to appease the appetite of the hungry noble.

In the hall, which was spacious and elegant, immediately over the door of the breakfast-room, was affixed the head of a wolf, the leer of whose eye, as it gazed from the stuffed pericranium on the surrounding objects, bespoke its proprietor to be possessed of a disposition more formidable than amiable. The animal in question, after having its pastime in the adjoining forest, to the great terror of the population, had at length received a *ne exeat regno* in the shape of a thrust from the hunting-spear of a former lord of the castle, who, pluming himself on the extent of the feat, thenceforth assumed the wolf's-head as his crest. Around this relic of the defunct monster were suspended the antlered helms of many of the more peaceful denizens of the forest; while the preserved skins of otters, slain in the adjacent river, formed a meet society to the remnants of these things gone by. *Conteaux-de-chasse*, spears for the boar and otter, were also arranged in a sportsman-like manner. We must not omit the "birding-piece" of the young noble, which, though considered the *ne plus ultra* of gun manufacture of the period, was, between us and the reader, rather a clumsy fabrication. Throughout the whole castle there were abundant proofs of the wealth and splendour of its former proprietors. The large servant's hall on Christmas-eve formerly contained as many jovial retainers, and could display as good ale and wine, as any establishment in Germany; but as Staelburg thought of his diminished acres and scanty income, notwithstanding the change which had latterly come over his circumstances he could not but say "Ichabod!" There yet remained a library, which was often frequented, containing a number of books both manuscript and printed, which would have realised we know not



what from any black-letter book-worm of the present day.

By this time the breakfast was finished; and our hero mounted on his horse, and, followed by Fritz, rode off in the direction of Hardfels Castle, determined, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Kaisa, to join the chase once more before his departure from Baden. Profiting by last night's experience, he buckled on his trusty sword, and placed his petronels, well primed, in his holsters.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HUNT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

STAELEBURG and his attendant, riding fast, were soon in the courtyard of the castle of Hardfels. Here their ears were greeted by the calls of grooms, the orders of masters, the neighing of horses, and baying of the hounds in the kennel; and all appeared eager for the chase. Many of the rich neighbours of Hardfels had come to join their sport, and were now partaking of a suitable repast in the hall. Hardfels himself was too much engaged in diplomatic business to devote much time to amusements; but he knew the advantage of promoting unity amongst his neighbours, and conciliating their good-will, and therefore encouraged his son in all matters which might lead to so desirable an end. Staelburg did not make one of the banquetting party, but instantly sought out William, who was actively employed in seeing to the welfare of the steeds, as well as of the riders, and communicated to him the events of the last evening.

"It is very strange!" said William, when Staelburg had finished speaking; "but I presume they merely intended to rob you."

"I think not, William," rejoined Staelburg. "My opinion is, their aim was more than that. It was my life that they wanted."

"Indeed!" said the other, in surprise.

"Yes," continued the young Count. "I repeat, it was for my

life they attacked me; and had it not been for our friend Albrecht I should not be here to address you."

"Think you so? What benefit would your death be to them?"

"I think I can fathom the plot. If I am not greatly mistaken, the Count and Baron of Würmer are the conspirators."

"Assuming such to be the case, I am at a loss to discover what their motive can be. It cannot be your possessions, since they bear no relationship to you; nor, indeed, by the doctrine of escheat, by which they have defrauded so many, for you have an heir in your uncle at Leipsic."

"I am happy to say no relationship exists between us. But it is not my wealth they seek: they have greater views than that: their object, probably, is to obtain possession of your father's property."

"How!" exclaimed William, in surprise. "In what manner could your death put them in possession of my father's estates, to the detriment of myself and sister?"

"Do you not see, William, by my death the Baron of Würmer would gain your sister's hand without much trouble; for he has your father's consent?"

"But not mine!" said the heir of Hardfels, impetuously. "Bertha's brother will never allow her to marry a man she cannot find it in her heart to love,—the Baron of Hardfels, the Count and Baron of Würmer, notwithstanding."

"Nay, William," said Staelburg; "neither your sister nor father shall suffer any wrong, while I have an arm to prevent or avenge an insult. But if Würmer gains your sister's hand, your father must, as a matter of course, give her a dowry; and being wealthy, as he is, he will doubtless bestow upon her one worthy of a princess."

"My father must be the victim of some diabolical plot, that he thus disposes of his daughter's hand, his own possessions, and the happiness of us all, so madly," said William.

"Perhaps so," said Staelburg, seriously, but with great composure.

"But to our subject. These ruffians have once tried to take my life; they have been foiled, with some loss to themselves. Revenge they will endeavour to have; the attempts may be tardy, but, depend upon it, they will make at least one more attack on me."

"Think you they may obtain intelligence of to-day's hunt, and take advantage of it to put their schemes into execution?" observed William.

"Should such be the case, I have something here," replied the young Count, pointing to the whistle before mentioned, "from which I hope to obtain assistance, if needed. It was given me by Albrecht, after last night's occurrence."

An inspection of the article in question, and an explanation of its use, dispelled William of Hardfels' fears for his friend's safety. Apologising for the necessity of breaking off the subject, the young heir of Hardfels returned to the refreshment-room, to join the guests there assembled. As the Baron was at that time absent at Baden-Baden, on business of importance, all details were committed to William; and none of the numerous sportsmen had any fault to find with the young man's hospitality. Of all sports none can compete with hunting, as a means of producing harmony and good feeling among the sons of Adam. Persons having the beautiful scenery, the fresh air, and so exciting a sport in common, cannot be actuated with any very unpleasant feelings towards each other.

The repast was broken off by the entrance of one of the huntsmen, who announced that everything was now in readiness. The summons was gladly obeyed; and each son of Nimrod was soon in the courtyard, where such a jingling of stirrups, &c. was heard as would baffle all attempt at description.

As the joyous cavalcade proceeded to the woodlands, it was augmented by the arrival of other sportsmen who, either from modesty or lack of time, had been pre-

vented from putting in an earlier appearance.

Scarcely was Hardfels Castle left a mile behind, ere, one by one, a body of strangers, amounting to about ten in number, joined in the sport. The new-comers were aptly habited, and extremely well mounted. No one could obtain any insight into their condition; and the favourite conjecture of the many hazarded on the subject was, that they were courtiers of the Margrave, who, unacquainted with the absence of Hardfels, were come with the intention of transacting diplomatic business with him, and, the better to preserve an incognito, had assumed the garb and were partaking of the amusement of sportsmen. Suffice it to say that the strangers displayed a skill in woodcraft sufficient to corroborate the supposition of their being experienced huntsmen.

The hounds were of the fine old-fashioned breed, with thick, hanging lips, well-developed noses, strongly formed legs, and altogether admirably bred for quickness of scent, speed, and endurance. The foresters and rangers attended in great numbers, for the purpose of driving the deer from his haunts. A short ride through that exquisite forest scenery for which Germany is so justly celebrated, brought them to the coppice mentioned by Fritz. After the services of the foresters had been put into requisition for a little time, a noble stag bounded from the thicket, tossing his amply antlered head as if in defiance of his assailants. The hounds followed him closely, giving tongue in a style with which even the fastidious Sir Roger de Coverley could find no fault. The hunters giving loud halloas to the dogs, set off briskly in pursuit; but the speed of the stag seemed to promise a long and lively chase. All set out together, but a very short time served to show the inequality of the steeds. The field was widely scattered; but Staelburg, William, and their faithful attendants, Fritz and Karl, were about the foremost. Next to them came, at some little



distance from each other, the mysterious strangers to whom we alluded, and whose good steeds enabled them to maintain a respectable position. Enlivened by the chase, Staelburg and his friend William, regardless of dangers from numerous precipices, quagmires, &c., dashed on. The agile barb of the former seemed to know of no fatigue, and to be fully inspired by its master's ardour. The stag was indeed a noble beast, and a spirited chase did he lead across a close country, with but few checks.

"William," said Staelburg to his bosom friend, "what is your opinion of our companions? They appear to regard our movements with some attention; and do you not mark their whispers when they approach each other? Think you they meditate aught of ill against us?"

"I know not, Staelburg," replied the other. "But I should think this was too deep a game to be played by Ruffo; and no one else but his patrons, the Würmers, could wish you any ill. We had better look to our weapons."

So saying, William and his companions took every precaution to ensure the utility of their arms. While thus engaged, one of the party before mentioned, urging his horse violently forwards, succeeded in passing them, gazing intently on Staelburg; and the latter thought he could recognise in his countenance some resemblance to one of his assailants on the previous night. He also saw, or fancied he saw, the stranger fix his eyes attentively on the silver whistle which he wore. These reflections were reserved to himself; for the mind of William was too much occupied with the danger by which Staelburg was threatened by the offended Baron of Hardfels, to pay much heed to anything else.

"My dear Augustus," said he, "let me ask you what answer you will make to my father to-morrow respecting your love for Bertha?"

"I again repeat, William," replied Staelburg, rather curtly, "I

will not yield up my claim to Bertha's hand, unless she herself wish it; and no earthly power shall compel me so to do."

"Then," replied William, his sympathy for his friend preventing him noticing the tone of the last speech, "Bertha will never require you so to act. Still I grieve for the effects of my father's anger on you both. You know he is not accustomed to be thwarted, and you are well aware of his inflexibility."

"Too true—too true, William!" replied the other. "But see, the stag is almost overcome; hasten, or he may disable some of the dogs."

They put their horses to the top of their speed, and soon reached the spot where the stag stood at bay. One stroke from Staelburg's dagger put an end to his existence; and his horn sounded the death-note of the noble animal.

The strangers, who had kept almost close to each other, now rode up, and in a scientific manner began to enclose Staelburg and his three companions. Their motive, before conjectured, was quickly discovered; and a moment served to put the little band in a posture of defence. The foremost of the gang, who seemed to possess some authority over the rest, thinking any further deception unnecessary, advanced a little from his associates, and offered to spare the lives of the others, provided the Count of Staelburg were delivered into his hands. An indignant negative from William testified his abhorrence of such a treacherous proceeding. Nothing disconcerted by this answer, the ruffian, in whom the reader may recognise the lieutenant of Ruffo's band, proceeded to describe, in ready terms, the utter fruitlessness of resistance, and the advantages which would ensue from the adoption of his plan. Staelburg, observing the jeopardy to which his companions might be exposed from a rejection of the bravo's offer, counselled his friend (in the French language) if he mistrusted their ability to defend themselves, not to hesitate a moment in

complying with the demands they had heard.

"Gallant Staelburg!" exclaimed William, in a tone of the highest admiration, "such counsel well becomes you; but to accept it would stamp my name with an eternal blot. You know my career in arms is now beginning; and I trust my first exploit may be something nobler than to deliver my dearest friend to the dagger of the assassin.

It is said that no man is a hero to his valet; but both Fritz and Karl had too good an opinion of their lords to consider them less than heroes. They were, therefore, quite ready to hazard all in their cause.

Rapidly whirling his sword over his head, William, ably seconded by his companions, prepared to cut his way through his opponents. The deep voice of the first speaker was heard above the clatter of the steel, exclaiming, "Hare-brained youths, submit! I have sworn to take him; nor will I be baulked."

Staelburg, who had been anxiously watching an opportunity, now produced his whistle, and blew three shrill notes. The bandits, who seemed perfectly aware of the consequences which would ensue, eagerly beset the small party, and many lusty blows were dealt on either side. The robbers, although superior in numbers, failed to destroy the little band, or, what they more ardently desired, to capture the young Count. Staelburg was actively engaged with three brigands (on one of whom he had bestowed "a goodly wound," as a token of affection), who seemed bent on pulling him from his horse, when a savage yell of triumph broke in upon his ears. Suddenly extricating himself from his immediate assailants, our hero beheld his faithful Fritz weltering in his blood. Madly rushing in that direction, he dealt at the author of his fall one avenging stroke; the ruffian, cleft to the skull, dropped from his horse. When matters come to the worst, they begin to amend; and a momentary glance

around assured Staelburg that assistance was at hand. But he was sorely disappointed to find that the approaching band, some twelve in number, belonged to the mercenary Ruffo. Although his hope of succour was vain, his exertions by no means abated; on the contrary, despair inspired him with fresh ardour, and his efforts to free himself and his companions from their enemies were almost supernatural. The ruffians, pleased at the prospect of speedy assistance, fought with great vigour, and in all probability the affray would have had a speedy termination, had not an unexpected event occurred. While Staelburg was gallantly facing two opponents, a bullet from a musketoon whistled close by his ear, and pierced the brain of one miscreant, who was endeavouring to deal a blow behind. A sudden gleam of hope flashed across the minds of the beleaguered, as they heard the terror-inspiring war-shout of Albrecht.

"Now, our Lady be praised!" exclaimed our hero to William. "Here comes Albrecht! We are saved!"

"Not yet, young man," replied Ruffo's deputy, as he dealt at Staelburg a blow which would have unquestionably proved fatal, had it not been dexterously warded; while the return stroke, glancing upon the ruffian's blade, nearly severed the neck of his steed. The other assailants, perceiving the reinforcement Albrecht was bringing against them, made an orderly retreat, under cover of the advancing body of their companions. Staelburg and his comrades turned from the spot where each had been engaged, to the place where lay poor Fritz, in a swoon from loss of blood. Each dismounted, and endeavoured to restore the sufferer to consciousness; but the extent of the wound admitted of no hope of recovery. While employed at this charitable office, they were startled by the appearance of Albrecht, who brought a supply of water to bathe his temples.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed the



outlaw, with a kindness of heart which familiarity with scenes of bloodshed had failed to extinguish. "His time on earth will be short; but undo his vest, and give him more air."

Albrecht's advice was beneficial, and a heavy sigh showed that the wounded man still lived.

"My faithful Fritz!" said Staelburg; "I sincerely trust your zeal for me will not prove fatal to yourself. Medical assistance will soon arrive, and inform me better of your injury."

"Oh, my lord!" said Fritz, in a weak voice, striving to conceal his agony from his affectionate master, "do not concern yourself on my account. I assure you I do not feel the pain which my appearance may lead you to suppose."

"Drink some of this—it will revive you," said Albrecht, passing him the brandy-flask, which was of great service to him in the multitudinous enterprises in which his adventurous spirit prompted him to engage. The wounded man accepted the proffered flask and partook moderately of its contents; after which he appeared slightly revived. Albrecht next with the assistance of his followers constructed a litter, on which Fritz was placed, and conveyed to Staelburg Castle. William, leaving the hounds and deer, which the good training of the former had prevented them from mangling, to the care of one of the attendants, who had since come up, rode with the utmost despatch to procure the assistance of Father Clement and Master Haust, the leech. Both lost not a moment, but, having provided themselves with Missal, Breviary, and instruments, hastened to their destination.

Surgical skill, unfortunately, was of no avail. But the good monk received the confession, and did all that lay in his power to soothe the conscience of a dying man, after the rites of the Romish Church, which was the creed of the penitent. Poor Fritz did not long survive the administration of the sacrament of extreme unction; and after witnessing his last breath, the priest and

surgeon retired from the scene of death, leaving our hero to regret the loss of as devoted an adherent as any Æneas could have wished.

Soon after their departure Staelburg discovered, to his surprise, that Albrecht's present, the silver whistle, was missing. The pertinacity of his assailants left him no room for doubt that its possession had been one of their objects, and sad at heart both at the contemplation of the present and future, the count retired to rest.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE EXILE.

EARLY on the morrow, Staelburg mounted his horse, and rode leisurely in the direction of Hardfels Castle, hoping on his way to obtain some tidings of his friend Albrecht, to whom he might communicate the loss which had befallen him. On his arrival at his destination, the gate was speedily opened, and he was forthwith ushered into an apartment, where he found the Lord of Hardfels awaiting him. The greetings between them were necessarily short and formal, and the Baron was the first to enter upon the all-engrossing topic of their thoughts.

"I venture to hope, young sir," said he, "that, on calmer reflection, you will admit of my right to dispose of the hand of my daughter in such manner as may seem reasonable to myself."

"Assuredly, sir, when the consent of your daughter accompanies the disposition you may be pleased to make. Without such consent, I cannot recognise your right," added Staelberg.

"My daughter has been schooled with a stricter regard to parental duty than to remain long in disobedience to my injunctions. Doubtless, when she perceives that I am prepared to enforce, as well as enjoin, submission to my wishes, her sense of right will prevail over any temporary passion; and she will receive the Baron of Würmer's addresses in a proper and becoming spirit."

"Excuse my freedom, sir, in suggesting that perchance you would fall into a deeper error by enforcing, than she by refusing, obedience to your wishes. Can you," continued he, in a serious tone, "so lightly treat the affections of your daughter as to consider a well-founded attachment fleeting and romantic. No, Baron of Hardfels; I will never believe that your noble nature has been so tainted with the spirit of court intrigue as to prefer your own interest, or even the exercise of your will, to the happiness of a daughter."

In the place of the violent indignation which this appeal was calculated to produce from the haughty Baron, a deep sigh burst from him, and his manly and muscular frame trembled with the depth of his emotion. Recovering himself with a strong effort, he replied, in a tone of assumed carelessness:

"You have spoken much of truth, young man, not unminged with boyish extravagance. But, in consideration of the circumstances of the case, I pardon your freedom. When you have attained my age, you will know better how to respect a father's feelings. Enough of this trifling. I await your answer to the statement I lately made to you. I cannot but hope you are prepared to acquiesce in my views; in which case," continued the Baron, with more of kindness in his tone than was his wont, "let me assure you, that you will find no truer or more devoted friend than myself!"

"I thank you, Baron of Hardfels. I have given the matter the full consideration its importance deserves; but I am at a loss to find any justification for the un-knightly surrender of a loving heart. You have my decision."

With a desperate effort to retain his composure, which, adept as he was in the art of self-control, he could scarcely accomplish, Hardfels replied:

"For your own sake, Staelberg, I greatly regret the determination you have come to. With a view

to prove to you that I am actuated by no revengeful feelings, I will make a final appeal to you. Here," said he, producing two rolls of parchment, are documents for your choice: the one secures to you many a broad acre on terms at once honourable and simple; the other consigns you to an ignominious exile from your native land. I cannot conceal the joy with which your choice of the former would inspire me."

Scarcely had he concluded these words, when his auditor snatched with frantic eagerness from his hand the document dooming himself to banishment, adding: "Between selfish interest and duty there can be no hesitation. Again I state, my decision is made."

So saying, Staelberg commenced a perusal of the document he had chosen with such precipitation. It began with an affectionate address from the Margrave to his well-beloved the Count of Staelburg, and proceeded, after citing a number of reasons. The Sovereign thereunto movingly admonishing him to quit and leave, at the expiration of three days, all and every the territories of the Margrave, during his will and pleasure. The missive was written on parchment by a skilful penman, and bore the privy-seal of the Margrave.

"You now know your fate, Count of Staelberg," said the Baron of Hardfels. "At my personal solicitation, the Margrave was induced to forego his claims to your estates during your absence. Should you at any time feel disposed to recant your decision of to-day, my good offices shall not be wanting on your behalf."

Staelberg, whose head had fallen on his breast, as he contemplated the ruin of his prospects, roused himself to make a haughty reply, but he wonderingly forbore when he observed that the skilful politician and inflexible man, who was supposed to possess nerves of iron, was struggling vainly to stifle his emotion. Scarcely, however, had a minute elapsed when, rising with



dignity, the Baron answered, with a voice which to an unpractised ear would betray no traces of violent agitation: "The object of our interview being thus attained, let us not farther protract a conference which appears productive of pain to both of us."

Extending his hand to the young Count, as he prepared to leave the apartment, he added: "We part not in anger."

Staelburg accepted his hand, and almost mechanically asked, "And what of Bertha?"

"Be merciful and brief. Well will it be for both when all communication between you ceases."

Unyielding as destiny, the Baron strode out of the apartment, and ere the echo of his footfall had died away, Karl entered to usher the lover apparently for the last time into the presence of his mistress.

It would be wearying to chronicle the vows interchanged by the Count and his betrothed. The story is old,—very old; why is it that the Laureate sings—

"Who loved and suffered countless ills."

Are love and suffering constantly allied?

What could the lovers talk of but themselves? What could they tell of the future, what plans and what hopes could it suggest to them.

The interview was not a long one; on its termination both the Baron and his son accompanied Staelburg to the portal of the castle. The former broke silence by saying:

"Your property will not be uncared for. I may also inform you that any draft you may think proper to draw on me will be readily honoured by the leading merchants to whom I am known, wherever you may be. Let me counsel you, however, to reveal to none your destination, lest your steps should be tracked by those whose company you like not."

Staelburg, who was quite at a loss to account for the occasional outbursts of feeling which contrasted so strangely with some of the remarks and acts of the Baron, hastened to assure him that he questioned neither the integrity nor the ability of the Baron.

By this time the two had reached the gate of the castle, where our hero's steed was awaiting him.

"Fare thee well, misguided young man!" was the last speech of Hardfels. "Harsh and unjustifiable though my behaviour may seem at present, I repeat it, the time may come, though in all probability my eyes will then be closed in death, in which you will confess that I have sought, as far as my fallible judgment will allow me, to promote your real good."

"Fare thee well, sir! May Heaven pardon you wherein you have acted wrongly, and richly reward whatever good may underlie a scheme which certainly presents so forbidding an exterior!"

"Whither away, dear Augustus," asked his friend, with an affectation of cheerfulness, as the departure of the Baron left them alone.

## RECORDS OF WHITECROSS STREET PRISON.

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It was now dinner time, and our two friends sat down to table; and we must say that the chairman had not exaggerated as to the good cheer placed before them. It consisted of fried soles with appurtenances, a splendid leg of mutton and sirloin of beef, done to a turn, new potatoes (it was in the month of June) two bushels of peas, cauliflowerers, delicious cherry and raspberry pie, the whole "topped up" with fine old Cheshire cheese, fresh butter, and celery. Was not that a dinner for a king—far less a prince and those of gentle blood? It would be useless to say how this repast was enjoyed and devoured; for be it known that this kind of confinement seems rather to increase than destroy the appetite.

As these two friends sat after this repast, enjoying their cigars, Mr. Moss took the opportunity of observing "But, my dear colonel," (you see they have become very intimate by this time), "you have given me but a sorry account of our companions in misfortune, for hitherto you have depicted nothing but rascality, intemperance, and profligacy; for the sake of human nature I should be relieved to hear something of the troubles—the unavoidable troubles I mean,—by which some of us have found an asylum here. Surely there must be some redeeming point, something to demand our sympathy and commiseration, in so wide a field of observation."

"No doubt, my dear friend," returned the colonel, "no doubt there are many cases which deserve our sympathy; and I will introduce you to one who has more charitable notions of the world than myself, and upon whose veracity you may rely; but as I have no inclination to indulge in melancholy reflections,

you must excuse my not entering into those details, many of which would harrow up the soul of Diogenes himself. If you are in that morbid, sentimental frame of mind requiring the aid of romance to appease it, you shall doubtless be gratified; that is after *I* have enlightened you sufficiently with *my* descriptions of character. I will hand you over to our long friend opposite, who, you will observe, does everything mechanically; he appears to be devoured by a sensitiveness too delicate for the intercourse of this little community of ours; but nevertheless he is a shrewd observer, and my opinion is, that some day we shall see ourselves in print, for he is continually making notes. There can be no question but that he feels disgusted with the vulgar ribaldry continually heard, and feels a great desire to enter into a severe and well-merited castigation of those senseless persons who really seem to enjoy what to other ears is a profanation and a sin."

"But a truce to this lachrymose discussion—you shall be satisfied. In the meantime, I really *must* introduce one other of our doubtful chums to your notice; and I cannot do better than begin with that squab-looking person, standing with his back to the fire. You see, he just reaches to the elbow of one of those of 'gentle blood,' to whom he is a decided tuft-hunter. He affects the beard and moustache, carrotty though they be. Well, he is from the Emerald Isle; a *pervert*, and, on arriving in this happy country, turned Protestant, to the no small joy of our clerical establishment. Of course, he was patronised and petted, and, in fact, lionised. Such was the delight of the pharisees of Manchester, that they procured a



chapel for their adopted child, wherein he officiated, to the entire satisfaction and delectation of his patrons. He is certainly gifted with oratory, declamation, and a knowledge of Scripture history. I need not say that he was of the High Church party. Well, for some months, everything went smoothly on, although one or two observant people *fancied* they saw rather more attention than politeness required, to some of the ladies of his increasing flock. However, nothing could be laid to his charge on *this* account. But, one fine summer morning, the good city of Manchester was aroused from its apathetic slumbers, by the astounding intelligence that their little amiable pet was in the custody of the police, for a scandalous outrage upon a little girl, in the chancel of the chapel! Who would believe such a trumped-up story? It was found, however, to be true in the letter, but not in the law of the case. As a matter of course, there were partisans, *pro* and *con*, but the cons had it, and he was suspended from all clerical duty. His poor wife, an Irish lady, was so heart-broken, that she solaced her grief in the bottle, and is, to this day, a confirmed toper. Our punchy friend, with a mendacity truly his own, endeavoured to bluster himself out of this serious charge; and, in order to "clear his character," brought an action for libel against the newspaper which had reported, and commented on this outrage upon morality. In this stupid resolution he failed: before the law courts his antecedents were brought forth, together with substantial evidence to show that, from a similar cause, he was compelled to leave the land of his birth!"

After this exposure, he could not, and dared not show his face in Manchester, so he levanted to London, adding another to that class of scoundrels, so rife in every city. Here he commenced author, and added to his dignity that of doctor, with a Ph. after it. To this title he is as much entitled as you or I. He, however, turned his gift of speech into patronising the Free-

masons, on which body he is continually passing high and flowery encomiums—and in gratitude he ought to do so—for every member, foolish or weak enough to be angled for, made greedy bites, and our doctor lived upon the harvest he had sown broadcast. You inquire how so respectable a body as the Freemasons could be so deceived. My dear friend, they have not yet found out their mistake. But here he is. Enough of him; so we must be prepared to ascend to our chambers, for it is ten o'clock.

The wards below have been vacated, and the dormitories are animated, so to speak, with animal life. It is then that ingenuity attempts a foray upon the rules to be observed. You could not fancy that these men had associated together all day; you would rather imagine that, after an estrangement of some years, they had met for the first time, so various are the discourses and observations. There appears no desire to hurry to bed, although the gas will be turned off at half-past ten o'clock. They still loiter about, some singing, some reciting, but all laughing at some piquant jest or witticism. You may hear some real good duets and solos; but, unfortunately, the whole assembly *will* join in an uproarious chorus, sufficiently loud to wake the seven sleepers. This Babel-like confusion sometimes continues half the night, to the no small annoyance of the more peaceably disposed. Tired out by this exertion, each seeks his bunk; and, ere long, is mercifully relieved from sad reflection by the sombre veil of Morpheus.

Each individual has a separate bed, enclosed on three sides by a galvanised iron partition; the bedstead is iron; the clothing clean, plenty and good; the wash-basin is iron, in fact, most of the things in use are of that material. This kind of apartment is called a bunk, and is sacred to each person. The doors from the dormitories are opened at six p.m., and anyone so disposed, may, by rising early, enjoy a walk, and concentrate his ideas before the bustle of the day begins.

We have already given a feeble description of the events and employment of one day, which may be taken as a fair sample of everyday life, varying but little, and that only by a change in the victualling, and perhaps an addition of some neophyte aspiring to the honour of knighthood. So that a repetition of this portion is spared the reader.

The first question put to Mr. Moss by the facetious colonel, was, "Well, how did you enjoy your rest?"

A shrug of the shoulders, and a grimace, was the only reply—thinking it wise not to allude to the uproar of the preceding night.

"Any gent want the barber?" is uttered by a small, shrill voice, as a thin, spare man enters the ward. A general rush is made to be the first to receive the shave and curl for the day. You *might* be astonished to observe the dandified disposition of the greater part of the company. Some expend a considerable sum in this adornment of their person, to the no small advantage of this tonsor, an importation from the West End, to whom the sole privilege of attending upon the knights is extended. It was laughable to see those who it was doubtful if they had ever used a brush before, insist upon their hair being oiled and curled in the highest style of art.

"Now for a stroll, Moss," exclaimed the colonel, throwing down the *Times*, which he had been reading; "and I will finish my biographical sketches."

In one of the yards they found a man, the exact personification of the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, with this difference, the apothecary was tall, and this present subject is short.

"That man," said the colonel, "is an empiric of the first water, an adventurer of no mean aspirations; and has by some means or other found some confiding idiot, whose misplaced confidence is apparent by the appearance of the individual in our society. How he was "dragged up," excuse the vulgar expression, no one knows for a

certainty: but an over-anxiety to appear what he is not, excited the curiosity of some of our acquaintances, the result of which is that you cannot mistake him for a gentleman, although he has the outrageous impudence to call himself a medical man! The fact is, he was shop-boy to a dentist and cupper, and, after a time, being of an aspiring mind, he left his place, set up for himself, married a publican's daughter, and commenced practice. You must, however, bear in mind that this took place many years ago, when professional men were not so highly educated as at the present day. The struggles of this juvenile pair had now commenced, and in a very short time they were compelled to quit the domicile wherein they had hoped to gain a living, and this they did, forgetting that their landlord had some claim upon them for rent overdue. We will pass over the many vicissitudes they encountered; but for eleven years of their married life, they had flitted, as the Scotch people say, just forty-four times, *i.e.*, once a quarter! He then turned up to the astonishment of a good many, the statute of limitations favouring this move, and he was found keeping the tap of an hotel in the City, and employed as a fag at one of the London hospitals. Neither of these berths answering his expectations, his roving disposition came again strongly upon him, and from both he levanted, taking with him about forty pounds belonging to a club held at his tap. For some years he was in obscurity, living Heaven knows how. His fertile genius, however, brought him to a suburban locality as a full-blown surgeon; and if you looked into a directory, you would find his name with the initials R.N., F.L.S. after it. The two first are indicative enough, although the scamp was never in the navy in his life; the other initials may mean a great deal, but nothing definite.

But I cannot give you a better illustration of this man than his own explanations. One impudent



fellow drew him out under such a guise of friendship, that the fellow, fool as well as knave, said, "Well I did *not* pass the College of Surgeons, but I availed myself of the act of 1815, which exempts all persons practising *before* that act came into operation, and thus you see I *am* a surgeon." "Well, my dear fellow, did you qualify yourself by hospital practice and the like?" "Not exactly." "No! then you are not qualified. I should think." The response was a knowing wink, conveying more than words. "Well, but how about the R.N.,—what rank might you have held in the navy?" "Ah you are inquisitive I see. I went out in a whaler." Our inquisitive friend laughed outright, but said, "In my simplicity I ask those idle questions, merely, you know, to pass the time. Well I have seen a good deal, but I am not very old you see; how old might you be?" "Why," returned our quack, "I was just sixty-two last birthday."

"Indeed! just let us see how old you were in 1815. This you know is 1862, you were born, therefore, in 1800, so that it is quite clear you were just fifteen years old when you began to practise! what a precocious young cub you must have been! you really must be a remarkably clever man. But, I say, how about the other initials after your name?"

"Oh! you mean the F.L.C., that means Fellow of the 'ological 'ciety!"

"Indeed! with a prolonged emphasis upon the word—indeed! your orthography seems to be unique; I have always been taught to spell society with an s and call the word *society* and not *'ciety*; but I suppose I am a great dunce, and know no better."

"No, no—don't say that; but remember spelling forty years ago was not as it is now."

The questioner could hold out no longer; the fellow's impudence confounded him; and he exclaimed "Why, you are nothing but a d—d, tarnation impostor!" He turned upon his heel with con-

tempt in his look and indignation in his mind. The fellow had not feeling and sense enough to resent this downright insult, but with the greatest good humour joined in the laugh against himself. He is a contemptable object, and I despise him."

With a great degree of modest diffidence, Jonathan Moss said, "Well, my good colonel, as you seem to know the pursuits and characters of this community, and as you must have seen much life and service, it would gratify me much if you would kindly give me some information as to how *you* became an inmate of our present abode."

"In other words," good humouredly returned the colonel, "you think I ought, in justice to the others, to give some true and particular account of myself. This I should have done before, only, you must have observed, that merit is always modest, and when a man speaks of himself he ought not to be an egotist or a false speaker. I am not, however, going to give you a dying-speech confession of my 'life, character, and behaviour,' as they say in Seven Dials; but I have not the least objection to state that I was born and bred a gentleman; of that I think there can be no mistake. Nor am I a *self-made* officer, for I have fought my way up to my present rank with some *eclat* and have undergone severe and arduous trials, doing some little for the honour and renown of my country. I have endured the freezing colds of Canada, and the extremes of heat in Madras; I have encountered the wiley Indian mutineers and the pacific slaves of our West Indian Archipelago; and without vanity I may say that in the Crimea I won laurels, a medal with four clasps, and was honourably mentioned in despatches. So far I have always sought for, deserved, and received the good-will and friendship of my superiors and subordinates; and although, in my present position (this is my second appearance in this character) I have nothing to

reprove myself with, unless it be an infirmity of purpose, and perhaps a foolish desire to befriend the unfortunate. It is this feeling that sustains my animation, and I don't think anyone will accuse me of being a melancholy companion. As to how I came *here* you will learn that I was never what the world calls a careful man. I have ample means, in addition to prize money; and, perhaps you will be surprised to hear that I am at this moment a solvent man, though your boon companion. Having been placed on half-pay, my time hung heavily upon my hands; and like many other idle men, I took to the turf, not a very prudent resolve, you will say, but that cannot be helped; my ignorance in this particular created and received its punishment, for I have lost heavily, but not dishonourably. Of course, you know all about what are called debts of honour, therefore I need not explain that to you. In this dilemma I found I could not make good my responsibilities, unless my prize money, amounting to some two thousand pounds, should be paid by the stipulated time of settling. This, as a matter of infamous notoriety, has never been done, even to this day. Well, sir, I was introduced to a *discounting-attorney*; now, if ever there were greater scoundrels under heaven than these, I will give you leave to find them, *if you can*. My prize certificates were placed in this man's hands — a bill drawn at three month's date, at the moderate interest of sixty per cent., and the funds raised to satisfy my honour at '*the corner*.' I was certain that the prize money would be paid before the bill became due, so was under no apprehension as to the result. However, in this, as in many undertakings of my chequered life, I was disappointed. My very conscientious creditor asked no questions, but immediately issued process, would not wait the anticipated payment, and added about thirty pounds costs to the 60 per cent., and—here I am, sir. So you will

understand that the country I served, and helped to defend, has played false to her servants and placed hundreds in the same position as myself! Gratifying, is it not? But you see I do not lose heart. I have no tie or connection depending on my exertions, and I endeavour to take the world as I find it. In my more youthful days I experienced a shock which time can never heal. My heart was rent, my energy enervated, but happily not vanquished; but yet the memory of happy anticipations haunts my imagination, and sometimes renders me callous. Need I say that this, the worst calamity of my life, emanated from a woman? Yes, sir; one in whose hands I would have placed my salvation—a being in form——" Here the miserable man broke off, dashing a tear from his eye, and sinking upon a seat was lost in reflection. Mr. Moss, who could not but reverence this ebullition of feeling, turned from his companion and walked away. Such was the colonel's story, which bears the very semblance of truth and sincerity.

All that day, till towards evening, Colonel Desperate was gloomy and distant, wandering away from the frivolities around him.

After dinner, however, he rallied, and taking Moss's arm, said, "My friend, you must pardon a weakness which always oppresses me whenever I am called upon to even hint at *that* period of my life; for the hundredth time it has passed away, but not obliterated from my memory, and I shall endeavour to cheer, and not depress, you in your present situation." Moss merely pressed his hand, thinking it more delicate not to allude to the painful subject.

"Now to our biographical sketches," laughed the colonel, who appeared to have recovered his equilibrium, and continued, "Yon ungainly-looking tall fellow passing by, is, in his own estimation, one of the cleverest and most knowing blades you ever met with. He goes by the soubriquet of 'Know-all.' He has been here two



years upon *suspicion* of owing a considerable sum of money, 'although, sir,' as he would say, 'I am the owner of one half of Dean Forest. I have quarries and coal fields worth half a million of money, and yet I am here for a paltry fifty pounds. If I were outside, I could pay it off in five minutes.' 'And yet,' observes one, 'you have been here two years!' Turning upon this observer, looking as much like a savage as possible, he said, 'Who spoke to you, sir? Mind your own business, and leave mine alone.' 'If you bore people by the allusion to your property,' retorted the other, 'you must expect a Roland for an Oliver; keep your infernal temper and vulgar habits to yourself.'

"Everyone was looking out, at this juncture, for a little pugilistic amusement, but our knight of the coal mine and quarries being a bombastic, cowardly fellow, only scowled upon his stalwart anta-

gonist, and gave vent to his ill-humour by dictating to a man how he should boil his potatoes! In fact, *he* could do everything immeasurably better than anyone, and it was believed that his vanity would have led him to aspire to the throne itself. His disagreeable, meddling, underhand conduct rendered him odious to his companions. He was detected writing anonymous letters to one man's creditors, and very justly sent to Coventry, and kept at arm's-length, to the no small joy and comfort of the community. He was continually interfering and complaining to the governor, doctor, clergyman, visitors, and magistrates, and ultimately he was very carefully conducted to the 'strong room,' for an attempted assault upon a poor *little* warder who would not be dictated to by him. After this he was very quiet, and sunk down into a significant snarling cur."

END OF VOL. XI.

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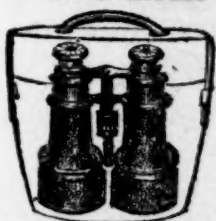
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# THE FURNISHING OF BED-ROOMS.

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**HEAL & SON** have observed for some time that it would be advantageous to their customers to see a much larger selection of Bed-room Furniture than is usually displayed, and that to judge properly of the style and effect of the different descriptions of furniture, it is necessary that each description should be placed in a separate room. They have, therefore, erected large and additional Show Rooms, by which they are enabled not only to extend their show of Iron, Brass, and Wood Bedsteads, and Bed-room Furniture, beyond what they believe has ever been attempted; but also to provide several small rooms for the purpose of keeping complete suites of Bed-room Furniture in the different styles.

Japanned Deal Goods may be seen in complete suites of five or six different colours, some of them light and ornamental, and others of a plainer description. Suites of Gothic Oak Furniture, Polished Deal, Satin Wood, and Walnut, are also set apart in separate rooms, so that customers are able to see the effect as it would appear in their own rooms. A suite of very superior Gothic Oak Furniture will generally be kept in stock, and from time to time new and select Furniture in various woods will be added.

Bed Furnitures are fitted to the bedsteads in large numbers, so that a complete assortment may be seen, and the effect of any particular pattern ascertained as it would appear on the Bedstead.

A very large stock of Bedding (**HEAL & SON'S** original trade) is placed on the **BEDSTEADS**

The stock of Mahogany Goods for the better Bed-rooms, and Japanned Goods for plain and Servants' use, is very greatly increased. The entire Stock is arranged in eight rooms, six galleries, each 120 feet long, and two large ground floors, the whole forming as complete an assortment of Bed-room Furniture as they think can possibly be desired.

Every attention is paid to the manufacture of the Cabinet Work, and they have just erected large Workshops on the premises for this purpose, that the manufacture may be under their own immediate care.

Their Bedding trade receives their constant and personal attention, every article being made on the premises.

They particularly call attention to their Patent Spring Mattress, the *Sommier Elastique Portatif*. It is portable, durable, and elastic, and lower in price than the old Spring Mattress

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## HEAL & SON'S

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE OF

**Bedsteads, Bedding, and Bed-room Furniture,**

SENT FREE BY POST.

**196, 197, 198, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD.**

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